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Employment Fund NEPAL: Qualitative impact evaluation report

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Employment Fund NEPAL

Qualitative Impact Evaluation Report

Human Geography, Department of Geography, University of Zurich
Research Inputs & Development Action, Kathmandu

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Jeevan Raj Lohani, Barsha Bhetwal, Uttam Prasad Upadhyay, Kamana Upreti (RIDA)

Zurich (Switzerland) & Kathmandu (Nepal), December 2015

University of Zurich[UZH]

RIDA International
Research Input and Development Action

Photo cover: Focus Group Discussion with PtP Garment Tailoring Trainees in Parsa District (Annabelle Jaggi, 2015)

Pia Hollenbach, Annabelle Jaggi, Ulrike Müller-Böker, Sunna Seithel (Human Geography, Department of Geography, University of Zurich) & Jeevan Raj Lohani, Barsha Bhetwal, Uttam Prasad Upadhyay, Kamana Upreti (Research Inputs & Development Action, Kathmandu) Dec 2015.
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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AGEI	Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DAG	Disadvantaged Group
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DOE	Department of Education
EVENT	Enhanced Vocational Education and Training
EF	Employment Fund
EFS	Employment Fund Secretariat
EFSC	Employment Fund Steering Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoN	Government of Nepal
IDI	In-Depth Interview
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEJC	Micro-Enterprising for Job Creation
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NSTB	National Skill Testing Board
OJT	On-the-Job-Training
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
PtP	Path to Prosperity
RIDA	Research Inputs and Development Action
RMA	Rapid Market Appraisal
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDP	Skills Development Project
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SSRP	School Sector Reform Program
T&E	Training and Employment Service Provider
TEVT	Technical Education and Vocational Training
TSLC	Technical School Leaving Certificate
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UZH	University of Zurich
WB	World Bank
YPO	Yearly Plan of Operation

Acknowledgments

The Employment Fund aims to contribute to solving a core problem of Nepal's economy – un- and underemployment – by transferring quality skills to Nepali youth in collaboration with the private sector. This impact study was conducted with the objective to assess the impact of the Employment Fund intervention using a qualitative perspective and further to show opportunities on how qualitative methods can help monitor impact within development projects. The team of the Department of Geography of the University of Zurich (UZH) and Research Inputs and Development Action (RIDA) wants to thank HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (hereafter referred to as HELVETAS), and especially Kai Schrader for giving us the opportunity to constructively contribute to this great project.

This study was only possible due to contributions and the support of a number of agencies and individuals. Not all of them can be named here but we are grateful to them for their trust, time and support. Our special thanks go to HELVETAS Nepal and especially to Dr. Bharat Pokharel, Country Director, Mona Sherpa, Deputy Country Director, Bal Ram Paudel, Team Leader of the Employment Fund, and Bhanu Pandit, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, for their support and willingness to communicate and share their experience and insights.

Furthermore, the study team is indebted to all the training and employment service providers who not only contributed to arranging interview respondents but who were key study respondents themselves. Furthermore, all the key study respondents – Path to Prosperity (PtP) and Micro-Enterprising for Job Creation (MEJC) beneficiaries, indirect beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, employers, district level government officials, district Chamber of Commerce representatives – deserve special thanks for their time and opinions.

The study team – UZH and RIDA – would like to thank HELVETAS for this great opportunity and chance to partner with each other. We consider the collaboration of our national and international institutions with their different backgrounds very cross-fertilizing and enriching. The partnership was placed on good communication, a trustful relation and an efficient target-oriented working style. Both partners were open and willing to learn from each other and accepted input, comments and recommendations for improvement from each other.

Last but not least we want to express our special thanks to the entire RIDA field team for their painstaking efforts in data collection and management.

The Study Team

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Executive Summary

Purpose of the Impact Study

The Employment Fund Nepal (EF) started its operation in 2008. The EF funds short-term vocational, life and business skills trainings, which are implemented by private sector Training and Employment Service Providers (T&Es). Through this collaboration with the private sector and its results- and category-based payment system, the EF has developed an innovative approach to target and train economically poor and socially disadvantaged youth and to link them to gainful employment in the Nepali labour market. Being active in most of Nepal's districts, its capital outreach with almost 100'000 graduates (2008-2015) is impressive.

As part of its monitoring and evaluation framework, HELVETAS employs a variety of controlling mechanisms; inter alia **impact studies of selected projects**. The Employment Fund has been selected for such a comprehensive study as it represents a strategically significant approach, has a sizeable outreach and has accumulated significant experience. Since the operation of the EF is terminating mid-2015, HELVETAS-Nepal will design and propose a new intervention in the sector that will build on the experiences and lessons learned from the EF.

With its finding and recommendations, this impact assessment aims to contribute to the elaboration of this new project document. Furthermore, the study is intended to establish a series of evidence-based case studies applying qualitative methodology that document the impacts of HELVETAS' work and shed light on the challenges of reaching the poor and disadvantaged in Nepal.

What was analysed?

The impact assessment provides information about the program's broad **outreach** and the **outcome**, based on a secondary data analysis. Further, the study gives information regarding the qualitative **impact**, based on qualitative primary data. It analyses the ***impact hypothesis*** of the EF program: *"Through the skills training and facilitation for employment to unemployed youth by Training and employment service provider economically and socially disadvantaged youth in Nepal are gainfully employed and have therefore improved their living conditions"* (cf. ToR 2015, Annex 3).

Key Information on the Evaluation Process and Methodology

In order to get an overview on the EF program, the 17 existing and accessible previous EF evaluation reports and impact studies were reviewed. In addition, primary data of the EF database were analyzed in order to present numeric visualizations and graphs to illustrate and show the outcome and outreach of the EF program since its implementation.

For the qualitative impact study, field research was carried out in five districts. The applied qualitative data collection methods were composed of semi-structured **In-Depth Interviews (IDI)**, **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** and **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** with more than 120 respondents related to the EF program. The respondents included direct beneficiaries of the EF, who had taken PtP or MEJC training; additionally, indirect beneficiaries or dependents of direct beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries (youth who were eligible but did not receive training), employers of former EF participants, T&Es, and district level stakeholders were interviewed.

Key Findings

The aim of the **systematic review of existing reports** and the EF **database** was to summarize what is already known about the **outreach** and the **outcome** of the EF. Further, it helped to identify gaps of information.

(1) Most of the EF's targets were reached, e.g. to provide over 50 % female and disadvantaged participants access to vocational training or to bring graduates into gainful employment. Eye-catching is that the proportion of graduates becoming self-employed increased continuously over the years, and that the proportion of females involved in non-traditional trades improved. However, the number of participating Dalits has never significantly increased over the years. The proportion of gainfully employed Dalits and female DAGs (Disadvantaged Groups) remained the lowest of all groups.

(2) The review of the EF Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system reveals an uneven distribution of the collection and consideration of quantitative versus qualitative data. Existing reports often provide an insight into the quantifiable outcome and outreach of the program; they however fail to deliver detailed in-depth explanations and analysis of detected phenomena. Furthermore, the review comes to the conclusion that the current data management system is not sufficient to use the enormous data volume gathered by M&E staff and T&Es to its full potential. Its complexity and query constraints limit the possibilities of analysis.

The **empirical qualitative impact study** shows that the skills trainings financed through the EF have a direct impact on the lives of its direct beneficiaries, their families and dependents. However, the study also reveals that the outreach to the most disadvantaged groups has not noticeably improved despite the implementation of the Path to Prosperity (PtP) program component in 2013, which especially targets very poor youth[1] or youth with special needs[2]. This unsatisfactory targeting is related to a bundle of factors. T&Es were neither able to encourage eligible trainees of the positive impact of the training on their future lives nor to convince possible employers to employ the most disadvantaged.

Those EF graduates who reported recognizable changes consider the training to have induced a turning point in their lives and they experience improved self-confidence and raised awareness of their opportunities, capabilities and power to shape their lives. Changes mainly occurred on three levels: on a personal, family and community level:

Personal level: The key personal change is improved self-confidence. Beneficiaries feel confident about their skills and their ability to find employment or to become self-employed. Confidence was mostly expressed related to monetary activities, i.e. the ability to purchase basic assets, to invest and to borrow cash for immediate purposes. Female participants highlighted self-dependence, self-determination and increased self-esteem as important personal changes. In addition, women reported that having the power to take decisions on purchasing items, to support the household economy and to help family members has had a positive impact on their status and recognition within the family. Women feel empowered to articulate and claim their needs and demands not only within the family but also within their working environment, with employers, colleagues or clients and their community. However, some women reported that these improvements in status were only short-term and that their role and recognition within their families remained low. Many resigned from their employment in order to fulfil their family duties.

Family level: On family level the major change is an increase in the EF graduates' household income. Income has been utilized to finance regular family purchases such as food and clothes, expenses for education and health and the purchase of household items such as gas cooker, television and built toilets. Furthermore, it was often reported that the increased household income allowed investing in better housing (restoring or new constructions).

In many cases, dependents such as children, parents and spouses rely on the income of EF graduates. Most noticeably, children benefit from improved family finances. Women re-

[1] Poverty as it is defined by the Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) (as cited in EFS 2014)

[2] For example, highly discriminated and vulnerable groups, youth in remote regions, people with disabilities, HIV/AIDS affected, slum dwellers, ex-prisoners, landless, internally displaced or former bonded labourers, women affected by violence and/or prostitution, widows and single women, orphans, street children (EFS 2014).

ported that they have insisted on investing in better education for their children by shifting them from public (free of charge) to private (paid) schools in order to enhance their children's prospects in life. An anticipated consequence related to this is a decrease in the school-dropout rate among children of former EF graduates. Another aspect is the improved access to medicine and health care of families due to the enhanced financial situation.

Community level and beyond: EF graduates reported a change in their families' status and recognition within their community. Beneficiaries who managed to sustain their employment status stated to be respected and to be considered as trustworthy role models by their community members.

The impact study also showed that EF graduates have aspirations to further develop their career. Since they started to be aware of their chances and opportunities, they aspire to continuously improve their income, to be promoted in their jobs and hence to improve their economic situation. The majority of EF graduates aim for higher-level skills and/or multiple skills training that will enable them to become self-employed. They opt for self-employment and entrepreneurship in order to become self-reliant and independent. However, the human resource management within the often small-scale businesses employing EF graduates offers limited till no career paths to their employees.

Regarding the outreach of the EF, the incentive-based payment system and the introduction of the PtP component have encouraged T&Es to increase the intakes of trainees from disadvantaged groups and the poor. However, the EF is not able to cover ultra-poor and multiply disadvantaged youth due to supply as well as demand side barriers. In addition, T&Es have been reluctant to take the risk of financial loss, which is inherent in the EF's result-based payment system, as they rate the long-term employment options for disadvantaged and ultra-poor to be limited.

Overall the study confirmed that the impact of the EF program goes beyond its direct beneficiaries. The EF has helped to improve, promote and strengthen the private training sector in delivering high-quality skills training and to widen its outreach. It has contributed to the institutionalization of T&Es, to enhancing their infrastructure and facilities, and to developing a culture of competition, innovation and quality performance. In addition, T&Es have expanded the variety of trades they cover and have developed innovative schemes to deliver high-quality training courses. These changes will be valuable for the whole future Technical Education and Vocational Training sector (TVET) in Nepal.

Lessons Learnt

- T&Es consider the guidance and governance that the EF program provides to secure the effective implementation of set modalities to be the key of the EF's success.
- The result-based payment system is only possible because of a labour- and time-intensive monitoring system.
- Uniform program implementation and approaches do not fit into all socio-economic, -cultural, -political contexts within Nepal.
- The drivers and barriers, as well as the perception of change and achievement differ among individuals, locations and socio-economic, -cultural, -political settings.
- Multiple skills trainings (directly or indirectly connected to core skills) secure long-term employment, enable the expansion to multiple working fields and increase the confidence of trainees to become entrepreneurs by informing them about their rights and possibilities.
- Acquired skills are rated higher than levels of income. Graduates highly value their certification and hence their recognition as skilled workers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and insights gained through this qualitative impact study, the RIDA/UZH team would like to make some recommendations regarding the design and implementation of possible future programs:

- Reconsider the threshold defining 'gainful employment' as a measure for success. Locality, individual and economic settings lead to different ratings of one's income level. In addition, employment contracts often provide more than mere monetary income (e.g. board and lodging, travel costs, etc.).
- Develop mechanisms to provide further support to EF graduates *after* the 6-months verification period in order **to increase** their **long-term employability** (also self-employment).
- Expand the cooperation with demand side actors (i.e. employment providers) to create more professionalized and decent working environments for the graduates.
- Create **higher public demand** for the training (in addition to T&E campaigns). Start utilizing available government networks and other existing mechanisms/channels to organize national and regional awareness campaigns.

- Explore options to cooperate and **include the Chamber of Commerce** within skills training programs, especially in setting up mechanism to forecast job opportunities and to create links with employers and the sector.
- Expand multiple skills and soft skills trainings.
- Deepen the understanding of individual, regional and societal contexts of DAGs and women and of how and by whom discrimination is produced and reproduced, and provide focused support.
- Differentiate the current monitoring approach (incl. staff): one entity should be responsible for the process-, another for the results monitoring.
- Use **M&E as a learning tool** and not as controlling mechanism.
- Integrate qualitative methods and analysis within the M&E system (and the EF database) to gain evidence-based knowledge on intended but also unintended impact and changes.
- Establish long-term tracking mechanisms to track randomly or purposefully selected graduates.

Conclusion

On the whole, the Employment Fund program successfully met its objectives to enable youth to generate a reliable source of income by establishing an effective mechanism to fund short-term skills training and employment services implemented by private sector T&Es. The program has direct impact on the lives of its direct beneficiaries and their families. For the majority of beneficiaries, life has changed its course and direction, and they consider to have found a new way of looking at their lives and their positioning within their families and their community. The skills training and their improved employment situation have contributed to building up self-confidence, self-esteem and self-determination, especially for women.

1. Introduction

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) initiated the Employment Fund (EF) in 2007 and started its operation in 2008. The main rationale for setting up the EF was to establish an effective mechanism for funding short-term skills training and employment services implemented by private sector Training and Employment Service Providers (T&Es). The overall objective of the EF is to support the gainful employment of un- and underemployed youth by imparting skills trainings that are required on the national (and international) labour market.

The primary stakeholders of the EF are unemployed, out of school youth from disadvantaged groups[3] (DAG) including women aged 16 to 40 years and men aged 16 to 35 years[4]. The objective is to stimulate private sector T&Es throughout the country to offer occupational skills trainings to these target groups in order to increase their opportunities to achieve gainful and long-term employment. Furthermore, the EF aims to enhance the training and management capacity of the T&Es by strengthening their ability to deliver better quality trainings in order to accomplish the intended outcomes and outreach. Pioneering is that the EF follows a result-based post-financing payment system in order to increase the positive impact and outreach of the program.

Over the years the EF has managed to obtain and utilize resources from SDC, the World Bank (WB) and the British Department for International Development (DFID). Furthermore, the program maintains well-established partnerships with the Government of Nepal (GoN). The Employment Fund Steering Committee (EFSC), which is chaired by the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and includes representatives from the GoN and the funding organizations, is the governing body of the EF. HELVETAS Nepal serves as the Employment Fund Secretariat (EFS) managing the overall EF program in accordance with the Operating Guidelines and the Yearly Plan of Operation (YPO). The EFS' main field of functions encompass the monitoring and evaluation of the training and employment services, which forms the basis for the result-based payment system; conducting labour market research; piloting innovations, and providing capacity-building support to T&Es.

[3] Disadvantaged Groups (DAG) are groups of economically poor people that also suffer from social discrimination (SDC 2013).
[4] In 2014 the age group was set to 18 to 40 for both men and women.

A number of evaluations reported that the EF has been successful in gainfully employing youth and enabling them to generate additional income for their livelihood. For example, tracer studies were conducted in 2012 and 2013 (DVN 2012, 2013); both studies showed that about 60 %[5] of the formerly unemployed graduates continued working in the trained occupation and increased their income up to threefold only three years after the training. In October 2014, the WB released its EF impact evaluation report (Ahmed et al. 2014) focusing on the Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative (AGEI) that has been part of the EF since 2009 targeting women aged 16 to 24. The quasi-experimental approach of the report presents short-term effects of skills training and employment placement services in Nepal, confirming significant positive impact of the program on the lives of female participants.

This qualitative impact assessment aims to get a deeper qualitative understanding of the impact the EF has had on the disadvantaged and their families. Furthermore, it examines the EF’s monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

1.1. Purpose, Objective and Research Questions of the Impact Study

As part of its monitoring and evaluation framework, HELVETAS commissions external impact studies of selected projects/programs enabling contributions to strategic steering, organizational learning and accountability. The Employment Fund Nepal has been selected for such a study as it represents a strategically significant approach, has a sizeable outreach and long-standing experiences. Furthermore, the study is intended to establish a series of evidence-based case studies applying qualitative methodology that document the impact of HELVETAS' work and shed light on the challenges of reaching the poor and disadvantaged in Nepal.

In order to get a holistic picture of the EF’s impact, the purpose of this current impact study is twofold: (1) to analyse the program’s broad outreach and outcome (based on a secondary data analysis), and (2) to examine the impact of the EF (based on qualitative empirical field research) (cf. ToR 2015, Annex 3). Further, the study offers suggestions for the adaptation and conjunction on how to integrate, obtain, document and make best use of qualitative information in future project monitoring and impact studies.

[5] Sample size Trace Study: 2012 – 557 training participants; 2013 – 675 training participants

Key questions guiding the secondary data analysis of prior EF studies in order to assess the program's outreach and outcome are:

- What is the outreach and main outcome of the EF?
- What information and data can we access from prior studies?
- What are the gaps or missing information?
- What are shortcomings and where can M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) and the vocational training sector be improved?

With the aim to analyse the **impact hypothesis** of the EF program: *"Through the skills training and facilitation for employment to unemployed youth by Training and employment service provider economically and socially disadvantaged youth in Nepal are gainfully employed and have therefore improved their living conditions"* (ToR 2015, Annex 3) the following key questions guided the empirical qualitative field research.

Concerning EF beneficiaries

- What differences has the EF made in the life situation of its beneficiaries (unemployed youth), especially of the targeted disadvantaged groups (women, Dalits, Janajatis)?
- What are the various socio-economic impacts of the trainings on the participants' lives?
- How does the post-training life of beneficiaries affect gender relations and social empowerment? Do disadvantaged groups perceive higher self-esteem and different social recognition?

Concerning T&Es

- Was the PtP component helpful in targeting and benefitting disadvantaged groups?
- How does the outcome-based payment system influence the selection of trainees?
- How does the system of incentive distribution influence the selection of trainees?

This impact study was implemented through a partnership between the University of Zurich (UZH) and the Nepali research firm RIDA (Research Inputs and Development Action). The partners could benefit from each other's different backgrounds and experience. Both partners jointly developed the study design and methodology and jointly carried out the definition of the study sample, the development of interview-tools, and the pre-testing of the tools.

The UZH team was responsible for the secondary data analysis and therefore scrutinized and systematically[6] reviewed former EF evaluation reports and impact studies. The qualitative field research was carried out by RIDA. In addition, two members of the UZH team took part in the initial collecting of empirical data.[7] The UZH team compiled the report at hand.

1.2. The Employment Fund and the Background of the Intervention

The following section provides background information on the main pillars of EF and a brief introduction into Nepal's socio-economic context with focus on the Technical Education and Vocational Training sector (TEVT), unemployment, and disadvantaged groups.

1.2.1. The EF in a Nutshell

The EF (cf. Textbox 1) as a multi-donor initiative managed by HELVETAS Nepal is a novel approach integrating the private training sector. Being active in most of Nepal's districts, its capital outreach with almost 100'000 graduates (2008-2015) is impressive. The EF funds short-term skills training and employment services of private T&Es through a result-based payment system that includes affirmative action.

[6] Due to the mandate's time frame a review of other related specialist literature was not possible, i.e. the thematic analysis of findings does not include any further literature or analysis on neither the TEVT sector nor education in Nepal or worldwide.
[7] cf. RIDA (2015)

Textbox 1: The Employment Fund

Management & Implementation

Time period: 2008-2015
Operated by:
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
Managed by:
Employment Fund Secretariat (EFS)
EFS Staff: 42
Implemented by:
Private sector Training and Employment Service Providers (T&Es)
Donors:
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Department for International Development
World Bank
Salient Characteristics:
Result-based payment, monitoring system, vast outreach

Project Components

Path to Prosperity – PtP
Provide the poorest and most vulnerable youth with technical and life skills needed for gainful employment.
Micro-Enterprising for Job Creation – MEJC
Provide youth with technical and business skills to enable them to start their own enterprise and to create jobs.

Objective

Provide vocational and business skills training to youth in order ensure their gainful employment.

Target Group

Socially and economically discriminated youth aged 18-40 years

Target Group Categories

	Path to Prosperity – PtP	**Micro-Enterprising for Job Creation – MEJC**
A	*Economically poor* women from discriminated groups (Dalits, widows, physically disabled, ex-combatants, internally displaced, HIV/AIDS infected etc.)	Women from discriminated groups (Dalits, widows, physically disabled, ex-combatants, internally displaced, HIV/AIDS infected etc.)
B	*Economically poor* women from all castes/ethnicities	Women from all castes/ethnicities
C	*Economically poor* men from discriminated groups	Men from discriminated groups
D	*Economically poor* men from all castes/ethnicities	Men from all castes/ethnicities

Source: EF Annual Reports

The EF's central tool for program planning, decision-making and the organization of the result-based payments is its Monitoring and Evaluation System (M&E) (cf. Textbox 2).

Textbox 2: Monitoring System of the Employment Fund

The EF monitoring system comprises of two components: **process and results (outcome) monitoring**. All project stages are monitored.

Process Monitoring
Project-activities are monitored at different stages. Different checklists guide each monitoring stage. Four monitoring visits are conducted – pre training (1 visit), during training (2 visits) and during the skills test (1 visit).

Pre-Training:
(1) course announcement
(2) extent of applications
(3) planned training logistics
(4) selection of trainees

During-Training:
(1) technical standard of training
(2) trainers' or instructors' competence
(3) regularity and punctuality of the attendance of trainers and trainees
(4) support facilities (e.g. training tools and equipment)
(5) apprenticeship or OJT (on-the-job training) arrangements for trainees.
(6) preparation of employment placement plans.

Post-Training:
(1) skills test
(2) placement of the trainees
(2-6) four checklists are used to monitor the overall management process of the T&Es.

Results (Outcome) Monitoring
For the results monitoring, random stratified samples of the graduates a T&E claims to be gainfully employed are jointly visited by the EF monitoring staff and T&E representatives three and six months after the completion of training.

Three Months' Verification:
For a 15 % random stratified sample it is verified whether a graduate is **employed (PtP)** or whether he or she has **established an enterprise (MEJC).**

Six Months' Verification:
For a random sample of 30-40 % the graduates' six months' ***income***[1] ***(PtP) or job creation (MEJC)*** is verified.

To be **gainfully** employed, a PtP graduate must earn an average monthly income of at least NPR 4'600 for six months. A MEJC graduate must create at least **one additional job** to be considered a successful case.

[1] *Special Case:* If graduates are not immediately employed after training, T&Es can request a two months grace period, so that the income will be calculated over six months chosen out of a total of eight months after training.

Link to the Result-Based Payment
After completion of the trainings, the T&Es get the first 40 % of the total outcome-costs, which are calculated by adding the category-based incentives to the reimbursement of the training costs for each trainee. The results of the three and six months' verification are extrapolated to the total cohort of graduates of a T&E. Payments are: 25 % of the total outcome-costs after the three months and 35 % after six months. The payments are based on the extrapolation of the monitoring results and not on the T&E's initial claim.

Source: EF Annual Reports

Data regarding M&E is collected and managed through the EF Database (cf. Textbox 3). The EF Database encompasses a huge amount of data about trainees, T&Es, trades, training events, results verification etc.

Textbox 3: The EF Database

Management & Implementation

Established:	Web-based since 2011, before: file-based data management
Managed by:	EF IT and Logistics Officer
Data Users:	T&Es; EF regional and central monitoring staff
Data Dimension:	T&Es, trainees, trades, training events, monitoring observations, employment status of trainees etc.
Data Uploading:	Constantly over a one year training-cycle • pre-training, during training, post-training (→ Process Monitoring) • during income verification (→ Results Monitoring)

Objectives

- Facilitate the monitoring process
- Monitor and ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of all program activities
- Track the achievements of outputs and outcomes
- Calculate the payment of T&Es based on the trainees' employment status

Source: Karki et al. (2014); EFS (2012b); Personal communication EF staff 27.03.15

1.2.2. Background of the Intervention

Population and Society

According to the 2011 census, the population of Nepal is around 26.5 million with a growth rate of 1.35 % per year (CBS 2011a). The population lives in three geographical regions – Mountain, Hill and Terai (lowland) – facing different environmental and economic challenges that influence people's livelihoods. Although considered a rural country, over 20 % of the population live in urban areas. The population of Nepal is socially segmented along 125 caste and ethnic groups speaking 123 languages. The belonging to a specific ethnic or caste group determines – in conjunction with the economic situation and the regional background – the people's social position in society. Several attempts have been made by different organizations to grasp the notion of socially discriminated or excluded. For example, the 'Inclusion Index' (developed by the GoN), which consists of the three sub-indices "poverty or economic exclusion", "human capability" and "political participation". Bennett and Parajuli (2008, cited in UNDP 2009: 45), ranked Madhesi (Lowland) Dalits, followed by Hill Dalits and then Terai and Hill Janajati as the most excluded groups. Additionally, considerable differences were noticed in the degree of exclusion of women. Gender inequality is highest among Dalits, followed by Muslims and Terai Janajati (Bennett & Parajuli 2008, cited in UNDP 2009: 45). This implies that the degree of discrimination against women is higher among the most discriminated castes and ethnic groups.

Unemployment

Poverty is often attributed to a high rate of unemployment. The Nepal Labor Force Survey 2011 shows that 80 % of the population belong to the economically active group. Out of this group, only 2 % are unemployed (CBS 2011b). However, the underemployment or underutilization rate is high[8], and the access to adequate income opportunities is limited, and foreign labour migration plays an important role. Around two million people are currently out of country of which the majority engage in income generating activities abroad and send back remittances to their families in Nepal (ILO 2014). The Ministry of Finance (MOF 2013) highlights that in order to work towards economic growth and poverty reduction the focus of socio-economic development must be on the generation of national employment opportunities. Further it is pointed out that the education sector has not adequately been oriented towards employment and business trends. Therefore the Government of Nepal (GoN) allocated NPR 50 million as capital subsidy to increase employment rates through the development of cooperatives as well as to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship by providing seed capital. In addition, the GoN made commitments to support good quality entrepreneurial and vocational skills trainings and to formulate a national skill development policy.

Education

High access numbers characterizes the education sector. However, besides high access the education sector also shows a high dropout rate coupled with poor learning outcomes. The population in the school age group (5-14 years or grades 1-10) make up around 6.6 million people out of which only around 5.6 million are registered in schools (numbers up to grade 12) (CBS 2011a; DOE 2000-2011). Hence, more than one million children in Nepal are not educated officially. In other words: out of 100 students enrolled in grade 1, only around

[8] Up to 40 % of youth aged 15-29 years are categorized as underutilized (UN Nepal Information Platform 2012)

20 students pass the SLC (School Leaving Certificate) examination after 10 years. In addition, Nepal's education standards are poor and vary greatly among different geographical regions. The current education system, particularly the nature of examinations and marking, has been substantially preventing the poor and discriminated from reaching the upper school levels (Lohani et al. 2010).

The TEVT Sector

The first technical education and vocational training (TEVT) services were initiated more than six decades ago. In 1954, the National Education Commission integrated vocational education in the curriculum of secondary education. The new era of TEVT started in 1979 with the establishment of the Karnali Technical School in Jumla. The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) was set up within the scope and responsibility of the Ministry of Education to look after the overall affairs within the TEVT sector such as curriculum development, accreditation and supervision of technical schools as well as standardization and quality assurance of training courses through the National Skill Testing Board (NSTB). At the moment, the CTEVT maintains 14 training centres. In 2009, the GoN has initiated the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP), a comprehensive sector program integrating early childhood education, basic education (grade 1-8), secondary education (9-12) and TEVT. Regarding TEVT, SSRP created the option to take up technical and vocational training in 9th grade and to graduate with a technical SLC certification (TSLC). The curriculum developed for the TSLC program comprises of 80 % skills training and 20 % training in general subjects. TSLC is currently piloted in a limited number of community schools.

Even though progress within the TEVT has been made, only 3.75 % (estimated US $ 32 million) of the total educational budget for the fiscal year 2014/15 has been allocated for it, including the recurrent expenditure of CTEVT and donor funded projects. Therefore, the number of direct beneficiaries of official and formal skills training programs is still small. Based on figures of the CTEVT in 2014, more than 37'000 students/trainees were enrolled in TEVT courses accredited and supervised by the CTEVT. To reach out to more unemployed youth, several skills and entrepreneurship development programs are provided and supported through private and non-governmental actors in addition to the TEVT government programs. Currently, there are two noteworthy donor funded programs which are implemented through the GoN: The Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT) project, which is funded by the World Bank, and the Skills Development Project (SDP), which is funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). In total the current projects train around 50'000 youths every year.

Within this briefly outlined vocational and skills development training portfolio HELVETAS has implemented the EF program in order to improve the long-term employability of disadvantaged youth in Nepal.

2. Review of Existing Reports and Studies[9]

2.1. Desk Research

In order to get an overview on the EF program, the 17 existing and accessible previous EF evaluation reports and impact studies were reviewed (cf. Fig. 1 and Annex 2). The Inventory Table in Annex 2 provides an overview on these documents briefly summarizing their objectives, the applied methods and their findings. Further, the systematic inventory helped to identify and present already available evidence on the impact of the EF as well as gaps of information and shortcomings concerning the quality of the reviewed documents (cf. Chapter 2.3). This review[10] of previous EF reports formed the foundation to set up the semi-structured interview guidelines for the different categories of interview respondents

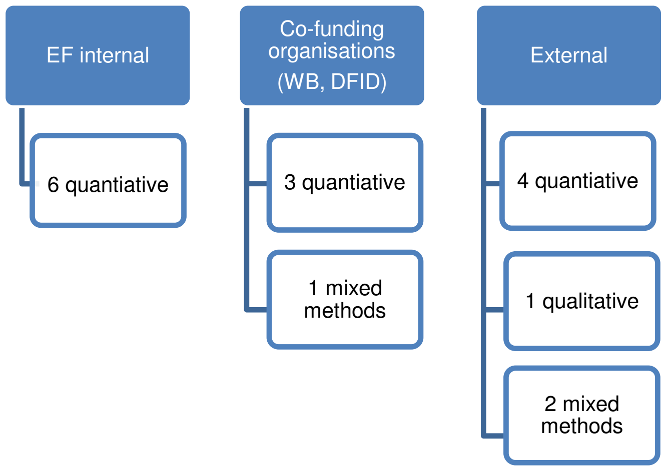


Fig. 1: Distribution of reports' accountability and methods

(cf. Chapter 3.1.1). In addition, primary data of the EF database were analysed in order to present numeric visualizations and graphs to illustrate the outcome and outreach of the EF program since its implementation. To better understand the data, which has been available

[9] For further information cf. Hollenbach et al. (2015)

[10] Due to the mandate's time frame a review of other related specialist literature was not possible, i.e. the thematic analysis of findings does not include any further literature or analysis on neither the TEVT sector nor education in Nepal or worldwide.

via the EF online database since 2011, the following figure (cf. Fig. 2) gives an overview on how the target group categories and indicators used in the EF program have been adjusted and changed over time, influencing the data set and its comparability.

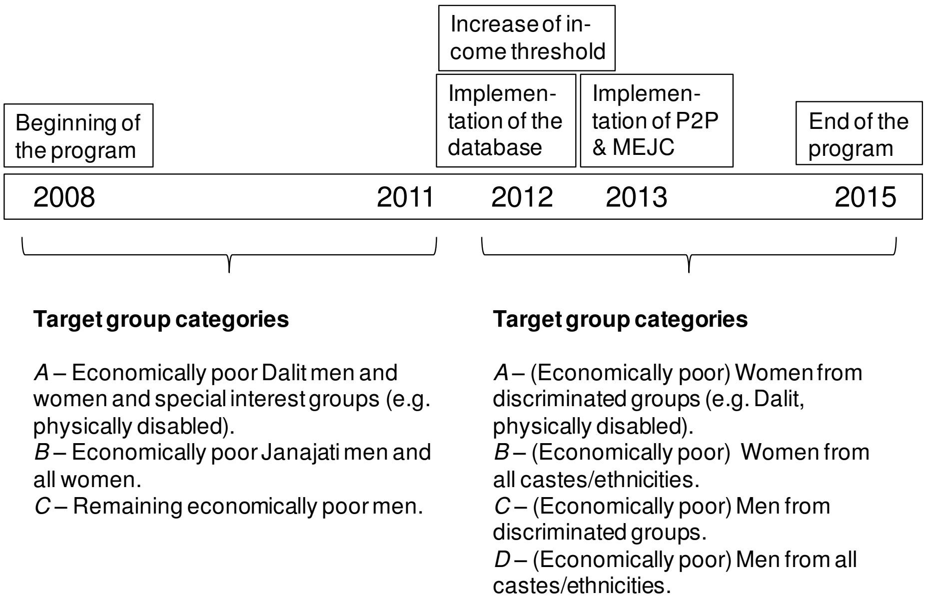


Fig. 2: Modifications of the EF program relevant to the comparability of data over time (Data source: EF Annual Reports)

Up to and including 2011 the target group categories differed compared to currently valid definitions. With the implementation of the online database and later the introduction of PtP and MEJC, the categories were segregated by disadvantaged groups and gender and extended by (MEJC) target groups that do not necessarily have to be economically poor. Henceforward, information was fed into and extracted from the database not only by the EFS, but also by the T&Es. Data prior to that time were inserted into the database a posteriori, though we noticed inconsistency of numbers compared to annual reports of the EF. To limit confusion the presented review obtained data for the years 2008-2011 whenever possible from the EF annual reports, whereas data from 2012 onwards were extracted from the database (if available)[11].

Six reports (all conducted after 2011 and hence using the same categories, EF guidelines and information)[12], were selected for a more detailed analysis of the outcome and outreach of the EF program but also to identify open questions regarding the impact of the EF program. Furthermore, individual open interviews and group meetings were held with selected

[11] This approach was recommended and approved by the EFS IT and Logistic Officer (E-Mail: Mai 2015)

[12] cf. Annex 2: The following reports of the Inventory Table were analysed in more details: 11,13,14,15,16,17

EF staff members in Nepal and Switzerland in order to get insights and gain a better understanding of the EF program, its M&E system and database.

2.2. Outreach and Outcome of the EF Program

Since the start of its operation in 2008, the EF program has trained nearly 100’000 youths in 64 districts. 86 % of the graduates became gainful employed. 45 % of the gainfully employed were women and 24 % belonged to disadvantaged groups (cf. Textbox 4).

Even though the EF does not exclusively target women and disadvantaged groups, it strongly promotes the inclusion of women and disadvantaged into a development process and a decent socio-economic environmemt. In the following, we will provide a resume on how many and what type of beneficiaries have been reached.

The target of enrolling over 50 % female participants and providing them with access to vocational training has been reached and exceeded. Out of all EF graduates, 59’200 (59 %) belong to a disadvantaged group. However, the breakdown of these numbers exposes that the percentage of Dalits, the most discriminated group within the socio-political and cultural setting of Nepal, has never significantly increased over the years (cf. Fig. 3). From 2010 to 2013 it even declined and has stagnated until today.

Textbox 4: Outreach of the EF (2008 to 2015)

Area:	64 districts	
Overall graduation:[1]	99'600 youths	
	53 % women	
	47 % men	
PTP (since 2013):	21'200 graduates	
MEJC (since 2013):	5'900 graduates	
Disadvantaged	2008-11:[2]	85 %
	2012-15:	38 %
Appeared for skills test:		81 %
Passed skills test:[3]		79 %
Self-employed:		26 %
Gainful employed	86 % of graduates	
	45 % of women	
	24 % of disadvantaged	

[1] Important: the numbers slightly differ compared to the reports of the EF (cf. Chapter 2.1)

[2] The target group categories changed in 2012 (cf. Fig. 2)

[3] Of the graduates who appeared at the skills test.

Source: EF Reports (2008-2011) & EF Database (2012-2014), own estimation for 2015 based on number of trainees in 2015 and rates of prior years.

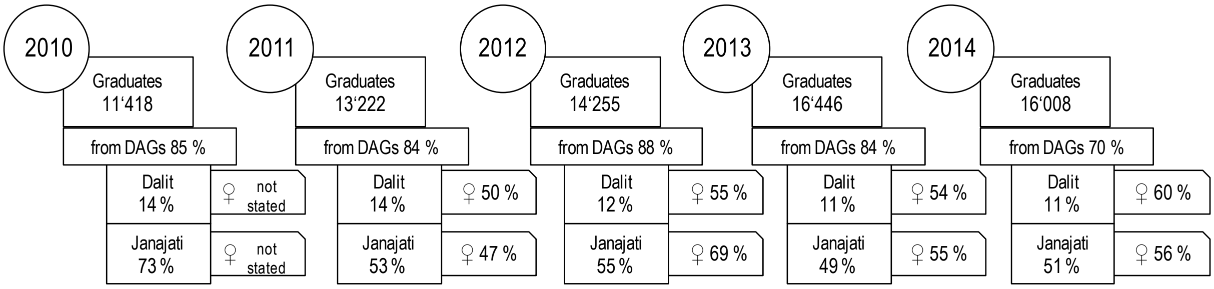


Fig. 3: DAG beneficiaries to total graduates and relative proportion of females (2010-2014)

The following figures present the **EF outcome** such as overall changes in the employment status, income and the lives of EF beneficiaries.

The EF aims to bring trainees into gainful employment six months after training. In 2012, the threshold for gainful employment has been increased from a monthly income of NPR 3'000 to at least NPR 4'600 in order to adjust to an overall increase in the costs of living. Fig. 4 presents the number of gainfully employed graduates.[13]

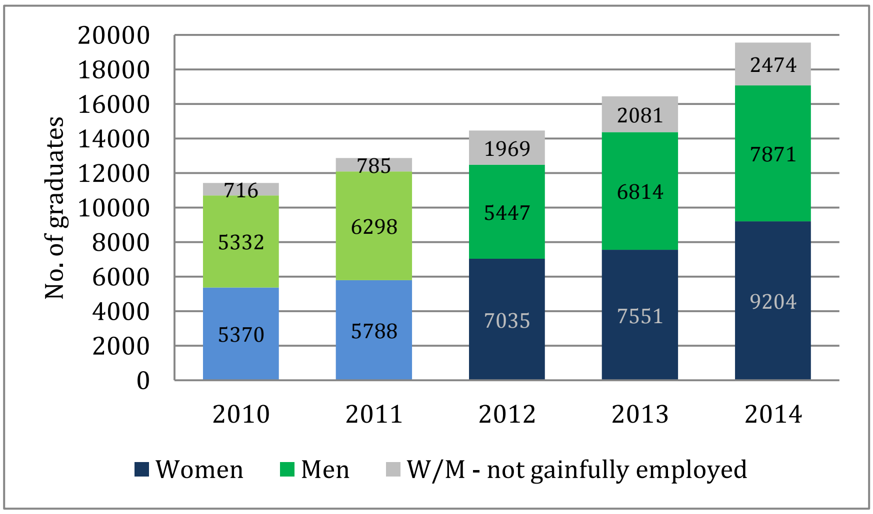


Fig. 4: Number of gainfully employed graduates per year & by gender (2010-2014) Note: The different shades of color indicate the adjustment of the income threshold. (Data source: EF Database)

Fig. 5 presents the number of self-employed graduates per target group category. The proportion of graduates becoming self-employed has increased continuously over the years. Even graduates that were not particularly trained for self-employment decided to start their own business after a certain period of contractual employment. Particularly high is the proportion of self-employed graduates among females belonging to category B (economically poor from all castes/ethicities). For males the increase is higher in the

[13] The values for 2014 are estimated based on the number of graduates in 2014 and the rate of self-employed graduates in 2013 (years are comparable in the program's structural conditions).

category of disadvantaged (category C) compared to economically poor of all castes/ethnicities (category D).

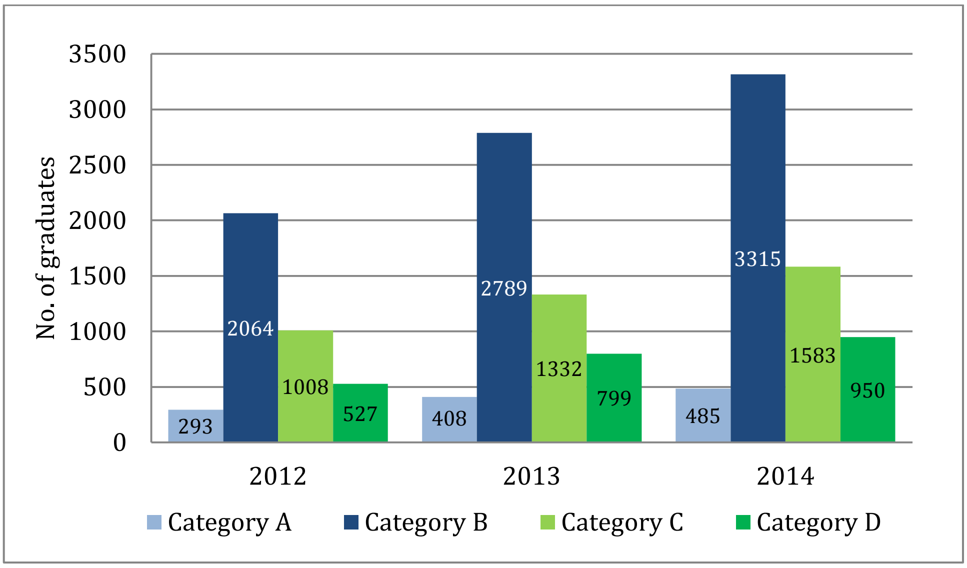


Fig. 5: Self-employed graduates per target group category (2012-2014) (Source: EF Database; own estimation for 2014)

Fig. 6 shows the average six-month income per target group category. Over the years, the proportion of gainfully employed female DAGs has remained the lowest of all groups and has not improved in the same way as the others. Gender inequality becomes apparent regarding income: male graduates receive higher incomes than female graduates. Interestingly though, in 2014, the income of graduates from disadvantaged groups (category A and C) does not differ significantly from the income of category B and D, respectively. However, the income differences fluctuate per year, thus further research is necessary to make significant statements.

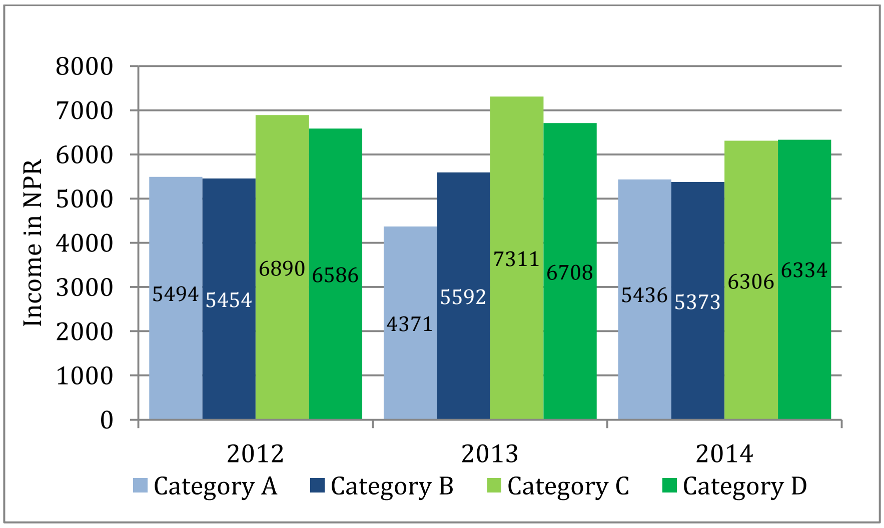


Fig. 6: Average six-months income per target group category (Data source: EF Database)

As the EF places special focus on women and the enhancment of their opportunities in the labor market, it introduced trainings for women in non-traditional trades, i.e. "fewer than 50 % of workers are women" (Mera Publications 2014: 1). The numbers (cf. Fig. 7) highlight that the EF has been successful in creating job opportunities in non-traditional trades for women and in convincing female participants and, even more important, their employers and social environment to accept women in male-dominant working fields (carpentry, metalworker, mechanic, mobile phone repair, etc). Since 2010, the proportion of females enrolled in training and working in non-traditional trades after six months has increased and has become close to balance with the proportion of women in traditional trades (for 2013: 58 % traditional vs 42 % non-traditional trades (HURDEC 2014)). However, when correlating the numbers of women in a non-traditional trade with age and district (cf. Fig. 7), it becomes obvious that especially more mature women (+ 25 years) and women from the central districts are responsible for this development.

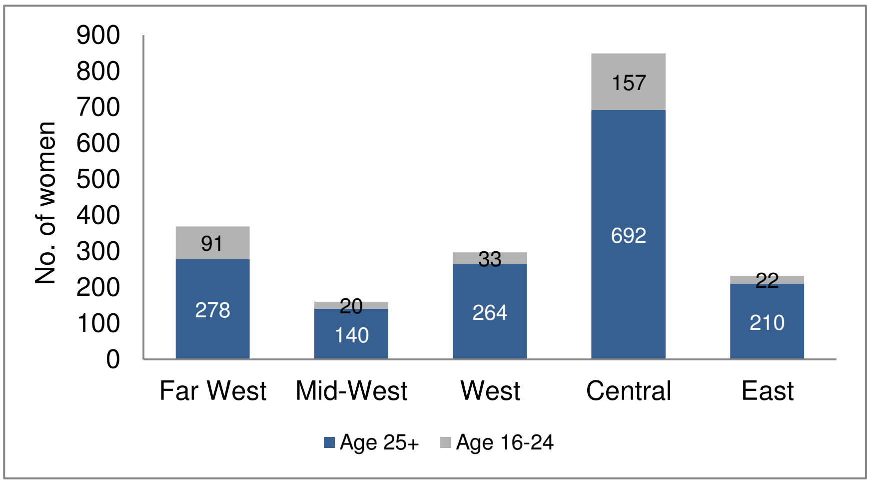


Fig. 7: Women in non-traditional trades per development region (Source: Mera Publications 2014)

All women trained in non-traditional trades and verified after six months show an overall positive gainful employment situation (cf. Tab. 1). The lowest rate of gainful employment among women exists in the Mid-Western Development Region with a rate of 88 % of women trained in non-traditional trades being gainfully employed.

Tab. 1: Percentage of gainfully employed female graduates who received training in non-traditional trades (Source: Mera Publications 2014)

Development Region	Gainfully employed women trained in non-traditional trades
Far West	97 %
Mid-West	88 %
West	96 %
Central	94 %
East	93 %
Total	**94 %**

The regional, societal and personal context matters and needs to be studied in more depth in order to improve and provide opportunities to all women of all regions.

To sum up, most of the EF's targets were reached, e.g. to provide over 50 % female and disadvantaged participants access to vocational training or to bring graduates into gainful employment. Eye-catching is that the proportion of graduates becoming self-employed continuously increased over the years, and that the proportion of females involved in non-traditional trades improved. However, the number of participating Dalits has never significantly increased over the years. The proportion of gainfully employed Dalits and female DAGs (Disadvantaged Groups) remained the lowest of all groups.

2.3. Missing Information and Explanations

Existing reports often provide an insight into the quantifiable outcome and outreach of the program; they however fail to deliver detailed in-depth explanations and analysis of detected phenomena. These missing information and explanations were identified when reviewing the EF documents and database and during interviews with EF staff. They are listed below (cf. Tab. 2)

Tab. 2: Information Gaps

Desk Reserch	
Income	Does the threshold and definition of 'gainful employment' mirror the satisfaction of beneficiaries with their income status and employment situation? How is the income spent and allocated within their everyday realities? What are regional, ethical, individual and gender differences in the perception of income? How does the status of gainful employment and income generation change socio-economic behaviour of individuals and their close and broader community. Do they trigger negative behaviour such as greed, resentments, increased socio-economic disparities or positive behaviour such as investments, socio-economic development and solidarity?
Gender Disparity	Why are women more successful in becoming self-employed than men? What are regional, ethical, societal reasons for gender disparities related to income, gainful employment and self-employment?
T&E	How do T&Es see their role as social change makers influencing and facilitating societal perceptions, biases and behaviours towards DAGs, women and other groups with special needs?
DAGs	Why is the number of female self-employed DAGs so small? How sustainable is the employability of females and males from DAGs? What are the reasons for sustainable or non-sustainable employability?
Non-traditional trades	What are the socio-cultural and political circumstances hindering women to participate in non-traditional trades? Why can more mature women better take up non-traditional trades? What are the socio-cultural and -political reasons?
Interviews with ESF staff	
T&E	How and what do T&Es think of the 'special partnership' with the EF and of working in the field of development? Is the field of development relevant to them or just another business opportunity? What do T&Es think about scaling up the short-term trainings in regard to the competitiveness of their trainees, their absorption within the market and its sustainability (market reality vs number of skilled trainees)? How do T&Es facilitate the employability of their graduates after the six-month verification?
DAGs	What kind of socio-political, -cultural, and -economic contexts positively or negatively influence the employability of DAGs, women and people with special needs? Do caste-based allocations of occupations still matter? Do they influence the choice of a training and the employment opportunities?
Loans	Why are official loan systems not accepted within the society (Is it a question of accessibility to and recognition by the banking and financial system (micro-credits), or is it a cultural question not to take loans within official financial systems)? Rigorous counterfactual questions. What would have happened with the sample group or individual EF participants if the intervention had not happened or if they had not participated?

3. The Empirical Qualitative Impact Study[14]

One **objective** of the qualitative impact study was to assess the impact of the EF on its direct beneficiaries, their families and the society in general**.** This objective was to be met by adopting a qualitative research perspective and conducting qualitative empirical field research.

3.1. Methodology

For this impact study, field research was carried out in five districts. The applied qualitative data collection methods were composed of semi-structured **In-Depth Interviews (IDI)**, **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** and **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** with more than 120 respondents related to the EF program. The respondents included direct beneficiaries of the EF (males, females, people from disadvantaged groups, and people with special needs) who had taken PtP or MEJC training, additionally, indirect beneficiaries or dependents of direct beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries (youths who were eligible but did not receive training), employers of former EF participants, T&Es, and district level stakeholders including DDC (District Development Committee), DEO (Department of Education) and Chamber of Commerce officials. Tab. 3 summarizes the research process of this qualitative empirical impact study.

Tab. 3: Research Process

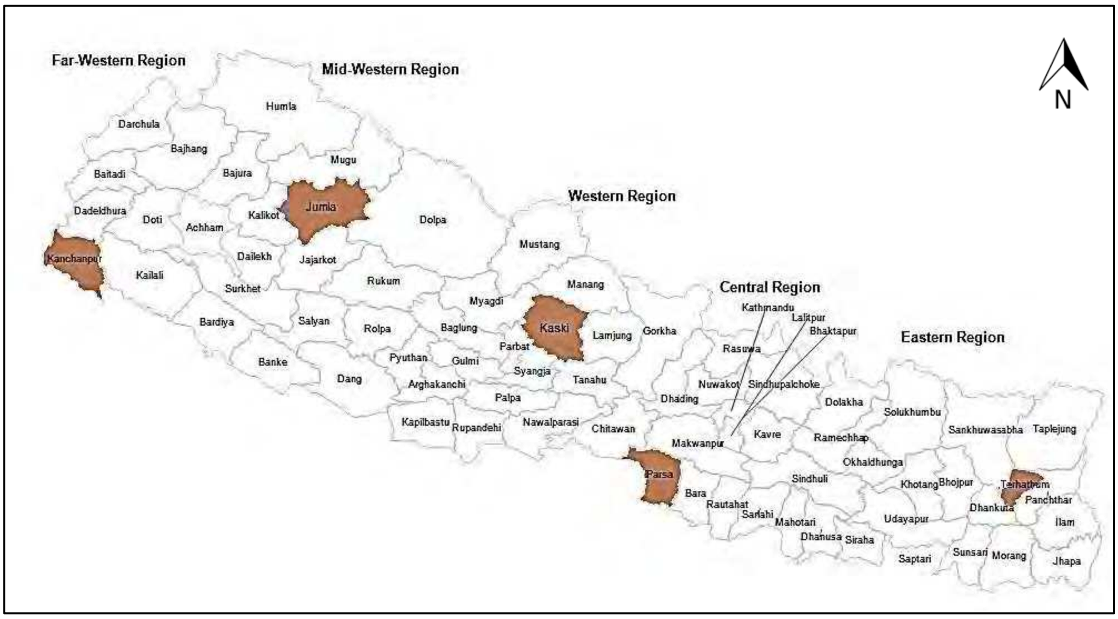
Step	Task	Activity
1	Development of tools (interview and FGD checklists)	RIDA and UZH jointly developed the tools (guides/checklists) for the semi-structured interviews and the Focus Group Discussions and adjusted them to each category of respondents.
2	Recruitment of field researchers and orientation	A total of 12 RIDA researchers were selected, including two research supervisors. On February 17 2015, an orientation meeting was organized with field researchers and a central team of experts in Kathmandu.
3	Pre-testing of tools	With support of the EF a pre-testing of tools was organized in Kathmandu (February 2015). Test interviews (and FGDs) were conducted with key informants, direct beneficiaries, employers, and T&Es. The pre-testing of tools provided feedback on the relevance and appropriateness of the tools, the comfortability of the research participants, the sequence of questions and topics in the checklists, the time needed for an activity, and other aspects. The tools were revised after the pre-testing experience.
4	First phase of data collection	The first round of data collection was conducted in two districts: Parsa (Central Terai) including Birgunj Sub-Metropolitan City (February 19-22, 2015) and Kaski (Western Hill) including Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City (27 February to March 3, 2015).

[14] For further information cf. RIDA (2015)

5	Reviewing and reflection meetings	After the data collection in Parsa and Kaski districts, a brief de-briefing meeting was organized with the EFS in order to share first hand impressions, discuss further areas to be explored and the revisions of tools.
6	Second phase of data collection	The second phase of data collection was conducted in the three remaining districts: Kanchanpur (March 12-16, 2015), Terhathum (March 24-27, 2015) and Jumla (April 5-8, 2015)
7	Data compilation and processing	Immediately after conducting the interviews field notes were compiled for each of the interviews and discussions. A sample of audio records was compiled, transcribed and translated into English for further analysis.
8	Data analysis	Data was analysed using standard qualitative research techniques with the help of the software *ATLAS.ti*. Indicators were identified, categorized and the transcripts coded accordingly.

3.1.1. Sampling und Field Access

The study was conducted in five sample districts: Kanchanpur (Far Western Terai), Jumla (Mid-Western Mountain), Kaski (Western Hills), Parsa (Central Terai), and Terhathum (Eastern Hills). The districts were selected in consultation with the EFS considering the regional diversity (high/lowland, rural/urban regions) and the socio-cultural diversity of beneficiaries.



Map 1: Sample Districts (shaded) (Source: RIDA 2015)

Per district, two T&Es were purposively selected by choosing T&Es who offer different trainings and who differ in size. Field access was from then on established through these selected T&Es that took on an intermediary role between the research team and possible study respondents for the interviews and FGDs. The selected T&Es were provided with guidelines lining out the desired numbers of and variation among the sample respondents according to pre-defined categories (cf. Tab. 4). The categories of respondents were determined in advance in order to capture the whole range and facets of the population to be examined in this study (cf. Merkens 2007). In scientific terms, this meant that a purposeful Maximum Variation sampling was strived for (cf. Patton 1990).

This sampling strategy was especially applied for the population of direct beneficiaries. Special importance was put on the inclusion of female direct beneficiaries and beneficiaries from DAGs or youth with special needs such as disabled, single women, and ex-combatants. To determine these categories of direct beneficiaries, the target group categories of the EF served as a basis. Further, categories such as “employed” “unemployed” were taken up. Direct beneficiaries were to be selected from both training components – PtP and MEJC –and from trainings on various trades depending on the nature and scope of the selected T&Es.

The two selected T&Es used the category guidelines to identify possible respondents. It was randomly decided which T&E was responsible for which of the categories so that half of the respondents would be suggested by one of the T&Es and the other half by the other. On the field level, RIDA researchers would decide on the final selection of respondents from the list of possible respondents suggested by the T&Es. In Kaski, the respondents were selected by three T&Es.

Indirect beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and employers were also identified in consultation with the T&Es. Indirect beneficiaries were individuals who depend on the income of former EF participants, e.g. spouses, parents, brothers and sisters. Non-beneficiaries were individuals who had been eligible and had applied for an EF training but were not selected. Furthermore, two categories of employers were included in the sample: on the one hand, independent employers who employed EF beneficiaries from PtP, and on the other hand, MEJC beneficiaries who set up an enterprise and provided employment to PtP beneficiaries.

As a last group of interview respondents, three key district-level stakeholders were selected per district, which are directly or indirectly related to the EF and/or the TEVT sector. The district level stakeholders included representatives or officials from district Chambers of Commerce and the industries, District Development Committee offices (DDC), District Education Offices (DEO), and banks/cooperatives. The bank or financial institutions which were included as key informants had provided their credit facilities to EF beneficiaries. The research team purposively selected the key informants based on their relevance and time availability.

The **sample size** for the interviews and FGDs was chosen purposively. It encompassed 80 IDIs, 25 KIIs and 8 FGDs.

Tab. 4: Sampling categories, respective methods and frequency

Information source	Categories	Method	Frequency (per district)	Remarks
Direct beneficiaries (youths who received training – PtP)	Female/Male (Employed)	IDI	2	1 male, 1 female (1 recent, 1 of previous batches)
	Dalits/Janajatis (DAGs)	IDI	2	Attempt to select one Dalit, and another district specific DAG
	Youths with special needs	IDI	1	Special needs include people with disabilities, widows, violence affected individuals
	Unemployed youths	IDI	1	Trained but unemployed youths
	Ongoing trainees	FGD	1	A group of 8-10 trainees who are currently taking training
Direct beneficiaries (youths who received skills training – MEJC)	Female/Male (Self-Employed)	IDI	2	1 Male, 1 Female (preferably self-employed but could also include employed)
	Dalits/Janajatis	IDI	1	Since MEJC does not focus on DAG, 1 interview with DAG member
	Unemployed youths	IDI	1	Trained but not employed youths
	Ongoing trainees	FGD	1	A group of 8-10 trainees who are currently taking training
Indirect beneficiaries	Dependents (family members especially spouses or parents)	IDI	2	Family members of MEJC and PtP beneficiaries who are employed/self-employed
Youths eligible but did not benefit	Male/Female	IDI	2	1 Male, 1 Female (Eligible youths who did not take training)
T&Es	Local training and employment service providers	IDI	2	Two T&Es selected for the study covering large and small providers
Employers	Employers	KII	2	Two employers (try to find MEJC graduates employing PtP graduates)
Stakeholders	Bank/Financial institution who provided loans to beneficiaries	KII	1	Cooperatives/Banks from where beneficiaries have taken loans
	Relevant government office (DDC or DEO)	KII	1	Depending on the availability of representatives
	Chamber of Commerce	KII	1	District chapter of the chamber of commerce

3.1.2. Data Collection

As mentioned, semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions were applied to examine the study's research questions (cf. Chapter 1.1). Each method used separate, semi-structured guides (tools, checklists) adjusted to each category of respondents.

In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

80 IDIs were conducted with direct, indirect and non-beneficiaries and T&Es. An interview lasted around 45-60 minutes. Direct beneficiaries were interviewed about topics such as how and why they applied for an EF training, how they experienced the training period, how taking training has influenced their post-training life-situation, their socio-economic environment and their behaviour. Indirect beneficiaries were asked similar questions concerning their relative who had taken training. Non-beneficiaries were also interviewed on their socio-economic life-situations. T&Es were asked for example about the development of their training agencies and the linkages to the EF, their strategies to target possible trainees, the trainings and how they judge the EF's impact on their graduates.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

8 FGDs were conducted with 8-10 individuals selected from on-going EF trainings covering the diversity of the EF's target group categories. Each discussion lasted around 60-90 minutes. The FGDs examined the trainees' motivation to join the trainings, their experiences with the trainers and training environment, previous training experiences, strong and weak aspects about the training, and plans to utilize the acquired knowledge for income generating activities.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

25 KIIs were conducted with two employers and three key stakeholders per district who were directly or indirectly related to the EF and/or the TEVT sector. Employers were interviewed about their business, how and what kind of people they hire and especially about the EF participants working for them. Chamber of Commerce, DDC and DEO representatives were asked about topics such as the overall economic and employment situation in the respective district, the availability of a skilled labour force and the TEVT sector. Representatives of banks and financial institutions gave information about their business, how they go about giving loans and how, why and what kind of EF beneficiaries they have granted loans.

3.1.3. Data Analysis

The RIDA research team followed the standard procedure of qualitative data analysis:

1. Compiling the field notes of IDIs, FGDs, and KIIs
2. Summarizing major questions to be answered by the data

3. Organizing and cataloguing data
4. Identifying key themes in the data that are relevant considering the research questions
5. Setting out the list of themes in a clear format by linking them with notes, quotes or references from the data
6. Coding the data and arranging it in respective themes along with quotes and citations (both field notes and available transcripts) using the software ATLAS.ti
7. Clustering subthemes within each theme
8. Making a table to synthesize findings
9. Identifying important quotes needed to establish linkages
10. Drawing a diagram illustrating where data can be placed and gaps can be identified
11. Data triangulation and interpreting the table in paragraph
12. The analysis used complementary coding approaches:
    - Inductive / open coding (refers to the identification of themes based on the data, starting with an identification of keywords followed by key concepts, and combining these concepts to identify themes)
    - Deductive / thematic coding (taking the key research questions/objectives as pre-defined themes, coding the transcripts based on those identified themes, and generating analysis)

3.1.4. Reflexivity and Limitations

The RIDA research team attached great importance to the quality assurance of its field research. The field research team organized review programs and one-day capacity building workshops to discuss and review the research process with supervisors and central RIDA team members, who pointed out data quality checks and quality assurance points, and suggested correction mechanisms accordingly.

Despite these efforts to ensure the quality of this impact study, the following limitations regarding the research process need to be disclosed.

To assess the deepness and complexity of the impact the EF might have had on its beneficiaries, it would be necessary to study them over a decent period of time and to become part of their lived environment and everyday life to understand the power relations, socio-political and socio-cultural settings, and the personal and family networks they are subject to. This empirical study can only rudimentarily meet these core requirements of qualitative research. Field research was conducted within a short period of time and was based on one-go field visits. Hence, a long-term relationship to the interviewed beneficiaries is not given. Their living environment before and after taking the EF training and the societal context in which they are placed could not sufficiently be assessed. Information on changes in the beneficiaries' lives is only based on their self-reported perception. There are no periodic data or qualitative cohorts available to verify and attribute those changes to their participation in an EF training. Furthermore, the findings of qualitative impact studies cannot be generalized easily because they highly depend on the context the research was conducted in (cf. Reichertz 2010).

3.2. Results

3.2.1. Overview on the Main Positive Impact on the Lives of EF Participants

The results of the IDIs show that the EF has had direct impact on the lives of its beneficiaries and their families. The changes were particularly substantial for those who materialized the training in income generation and long-term employment. Impact occurred on three levels: on a personal, a family and a community level (cf. Tab. 5).

Tab. 5: Perceived positive impact of the EF on its participants illustrated with quotations from IDIs

Personal level changes		
Self-confidence	Confidence in one's skills and abilities to get work and earn money. Confidence related to being able to afford monetary items, i.e. to purchase basic assets, invest, and to borrow cash for immediate purpose. Unemployed youth are confident to get jobs or start their own business.	*"The skills I have learned are enough for me to lead my life ahead."* (Unemployed PtP female, Kaski) *"I feel there has been a lot of change. When I came here, I didn't have much, now I have earned property worth around Rs 10 lakhs. This is all because of the training that I got." (*MEJC male, Kaski)
Self-dependency	Mainly women feel more self-dependent and able to make own decisions. They possess financial means to purchase basic assets and are able to contribute to the household income.	*"In the past whatever my husband gave or however he treated me,* I *used to accept it but after taking the training I felt we are equal. I can raise my child by myself."* (MEJC female, Jumla) *"After taking the training and getting the work, I didn't have to depend on my family for money. I was independent."* (Unemployed youth, Terhathum)
Empowerment	Graduates feel empowered to speak up, communicate with employers and have a wider communication and network in their community and workspace. This contributes to building up self-esteem and recognition of their own rights.	*"Lots of changes have taken place. I was just limited within the territories of my household and family. But now I am able to face the outer world. I can teach the skills I have gathered to other people as well. I have 2-3 juniors who come here to learn."* (MEJC female, Terhathum)

Family level changes		
Supplement household income	Income contributions by EF beneficiaries often are the only family income source financing family expenses such as food, clothes, education and health expenses, and other regular purchases.	*"I spend my income on household expenses. I have also planned to save some of my income. In the future, if I manage to save enough money, I will open a small garment factory. I am satisfied." (*PtP female, Kaski) *"The earning of my son's income has been invested to buy land."* (Indirect beneficiary, Parsa)
Enhancement of decision-making power and family support	Based on their income situation EF graduates became major decision-makers in their families uplifting their intra-family status. With positive recognition in the family, the encouragement and support increased to make investments, to take higher level training or to set up a new enterprise.	*"I got the support from my home [family] to take the training. Even my friends used to tell me that after taking the training, I can do the work. They also thought that after the training, they don't need to call for vet doctors from outside. I can also tell them about the disease and medicine."* (Unemployed youth, Terhathum) *"When I started my business I got financial support, worth Rs 60'000 from my father-in-law."* (MEJC male, Jumla)
Improved living standard	Income is mainly utilized to improve the living situation, for example by finding a better place to live, by purchasing items such as cooking gas, television, built toilets, by renovating or constructing a house or by purchasing land.	*"I have purchased a fridge and an inverter. I have also purchased a computer for my son." (*PtP female, Parsa) *"I just painted this house from my income. I also contribute to household expenses and to my child's education."* (Youth with special needs, female, Parsa) *"We spend on house rent, children's education, food, health etc. And we save some amount for the future to buy land and a house."* (Indirect beneficiary, male, Terhathum)
Improved children's life situation	An anticipated consequence related to an increased household income is a decrease in the school-dropout rate among children of former EF graduates. Graduates utilize their income to finance better education for their children by shifting them from community schools (free of charge) to private schools (paid). Moreover, graduates and their dependents now have access to near private health facilities in case of medical emergencies.	*"My employee has also been doing well with her life. She has sent her child to boarding school. She has moved from a mud house to a cemented house. She now has facilities of water and electricity."* (KII with employer, Terhathum)
Community/Society level changes		
Change in perceptions and respect in society	Graduates from disadvantaged communities who are considered inferior on the basis of caste place great importance on their enhanced recogni-	*"Before [the training], people didn't recognise me, now they do. They appreciate that though I am a daughter, I have been working as hard as a son. This provides me with strength and motivation."* (PtP,

	tion within their community. The training and their improved employment situation increased the confidence of DAG graduates and allowed them to earn respect and recognition in their neighbourhood and community.	DAG female, Kaski)
Development of trust and dependability	Skilled and employed graduates reported to be considered trustworthy by neighbours and their community when they require small immediate lending. This has thus enabled the graduates to obtain additional support from their community.	*"After the training, people have started to trust us. They also provide us with loans if someone gets sick in our family. They trust us that we can pay back the loan now."* (PtP male, Terhathum)

3.2.2. Key Outcomes: Skills, Employment and Income

The immediate outcomes of the participation in an EF skills training can be classified into three key categories: skills, employment (employed or self-employed), and income (cf. Fig. 8).

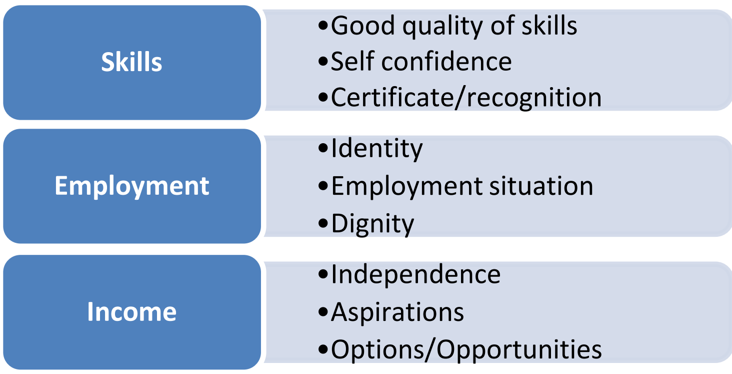


Fig. 8: Key outcomes and related main perceptions

Skills

Skills have several benefits and attachments. Graduates regard the training and skills they received to be of high quality. However, they also point out that the acquired skills are not adequate and sufficient to meet their future aspirations (mainly regarding income level). Similarly, employers mention the need for additional skills and experience to enable the graduates to deliver competitive performance outcomes.

Even though trainees hold having skills in high regard, they stress the importance of acquiring official certification. Most of the EF participants strive for higher-level skills training and official certification.

Having 'multiple skills' is considered beneficial when trying to find secure long-term employment, to increase competitiveness and to set up an enterprise. Multiple skills training could be offered in relation to the core skills that are taught in a training. Delivering multiple skills has not been a priority within the EF, which was criticized by some of the interviewed employers.

“When a business or employer hires a person, he looks at his skills along with whom or whose contact he has used to get the job. They also look at his behavioural skills and from which community he is from.”
(KII with Chamber of Commerce, Parsa)

“Females are physically weaker than males but they work hard and they are more honest. We can trust them”
(KII with employer, Kanchanpur)

“When I employ someone, the main criteria that I look at are skills and honesty. I should be able to leave my shop (for some hours) giving them the responsibility to look after the shop and business. I try to employ those who are in real need.”
(KII with employer, Terhathum)

Employment

To obtain employment some key characteristics must be fulfilled that are considered essential by employers:

- Trust
- Experience
- Patience/stability
- Good interpersonal skills (soft skills)
- Technical skills (multiple skills)

Trust has proven to be central to achieve employment. In the following, it is explored how people perceive trust and what forms trust can take. It is worth noting that when T&Es recruite new trainees and when credit facilities grant small loans to entrepreneurs, trust-related characteristics are considered (cf. Fig. 9).

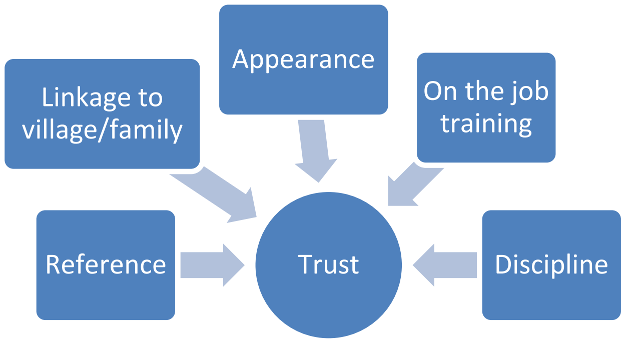


Fig. 9: Determinants of trust

Trust can be obtained through personal reference. If an acquiantance recommends a person then this contributes to building trust as the liability to trust is shared. In rural communities, being able to figure out linkages to the village and family of an applicant is important for the employer to build trust. If an employer knows an employee's family or village, this can serve as a form of insurance. Furthermore, employers regard personal appearance as a first indicator of trust. The personality of an applicant is also considered crucial for the success of the business since most of the time employers depend on their employees to generate or expand their business. Encouragingly in view of the gender ratio, women are considered more trustworthy, dependable and disciplined than men for any kind of job.

The chance of getting employed is high for a person with patience and stability and who wishes to work in the same business for a long period of time. Employers and T&Es look for someone with clear and stable plans for the future when considering applicants for a job or a training. Employers try to find someone disciplined who is ready to make a long-term commitment rather than someone with limited patience who is uncertain about how long he or she wants to be committed to a job.

"Training has increased the employment opportunity and also contributed to improve the quality of work. Considering the demand in the market, there is a need to provide advanced training by including new technology."

(FGD with MEJC beneficiaries, male Kaski)

"I have taken level 1 and level 2 training. I didn't have enough self-confidence to start the business when I completed my level 1. I started this business when I was taking level 2 training."

(IDI with MEJC beneficiary, Kaski)

As mentioned above, employers consider it important that a possible employee has acquired stable and good personal skills (soft skills). During the three-months training, the EF offered workshops of two to five days to its trainees to learn these soft skills. These skills included, inter alia, life skills (e.g. work attitude, self-awareness, health, decision making) for PtP trainees and business skills (e.g. business planning, financial literacy) especially for MEJC trainees. However, graduates and employers do not perceive these soft skills to be adequate or sufficient to meet the requirements within the working environment and work reality.

Although many beneficiaries were able to obtain (wage-)employment and reported to be satisfied with the change in their status, many left their job and set up an enterprise. The main reason for this is dissatisfaction with the status as an employee and the related dependency on salary payments, contracting, working hours, job security, salary increment, treatment by employers etc.

Graduates have different aspirations. Some of them want to upgrade their skills and want to receive higher-level trainings by the EF (MEJC) or other training programs. The main objectives of taking higher-level training are to set up an enterprise, to become independent from employers and to be in control of one's working conditions and income.

Entrepreneurship

For the majority of EF participants, entrepreneurship is not only a means to improve their life conditions and income but also the ultimate goal (cf. Fig. 10). Entrepreneurship is considered to be highly desirable. In fact, almost all of the interviewed beneficiaries wanted to become an entrepreneur. These results are in line with the findings of the former tracer studies which showed that many PtP graduates are trying to change their employment status from employees to self-employed entrepreneurs (e.g. DVN 2013). Despite the fact that entrepreneurship is related to high financial risks, it is still considered to be a higher achievement and to yield higher income. Entrepreneurship is expected to enhance one's image and prestige within the society and family. Furthermore, entrepreneurship increases one's decision-making power and independence from an employer. Thus, in the perception of beneficiaries, entrepreneurs enjoy a higher degree of flexibility and freedom compared to others engaged in contractual employment. This leaves more space to adjust the work place towards their pesonal and individual needs. Flexibility is particularly reported regarding working hours. Especially women anticipated or appreciated the freedom to decide about working hours and to coordinate them with their childcare duties.

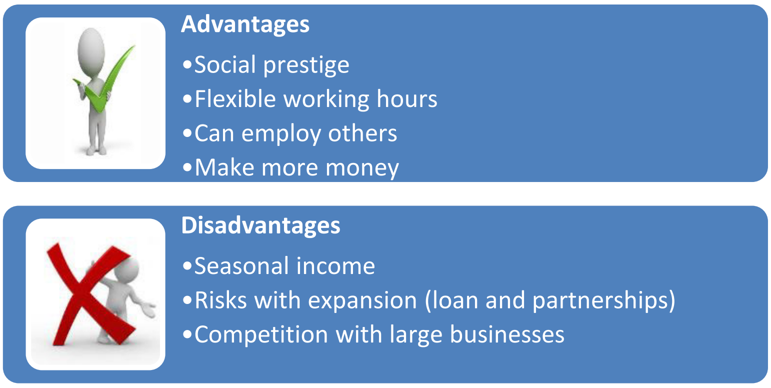


Fig. 10: Advantages and disadvantages of being self-employed as perceived by the interviewees

Another advantage of being self-employed, which was mentioned by interviewed graduates, is the possibility to employ others. Many graduates who started their business after taking MEJC training have employed at least one person from outside of their family as part of the agreement with their T&E. However, most of the entrepreneurs are also supported by family members, especially spouses, in leading their business. This has also indirectly contributed to the training, skills development and income generation of their spouses (mostly females).

Textbox 5: Banking Facilities for Entrepreneurship

For EF graduates (both PtP and MEJC) who choose self-employment through entrepreneurship, the EF and T&Es set up some ad-hoc arrangements to make it possible for graduates to make investments. At the central level, the EF came to an understanding with some central level banks to provide micro-lending to EF graduates. T&Es made separate agreements with local banks. These agreements enabled some beneficiaries to take loans from these banks in order to operate their enterprises. However, there are also some beneficiaries who did not receive loans. Most of the interviewed beneficiaries who failed to get employment mentioned the inability to be granted loans for investment as a key barrier. They were not provided with loans because they could not offer sufficient collateral to the bank. To meet the official provisions, banks require a collateral, especially physical assets such as land, building etc. Officials from large banks explain that micro lending is given very low priority and is only implemented in order to meet some mandatory requirements set by the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB). Banks mostly prefer to provide higher loans above NPR 100’000. For them, the unit cost of monitoring micro-loans is high compared to the size of the loans. Bank officials were less worried about the risk of not getting repaid than about the costs that incur when following up the small borrowers.

Income

For most of the EF graduates and their families the core outcome after participating in the EF program was an increase in their income and hence a more secure financial situation.

'Money' was one of the keywords used throughout the interviews and discussions. The following sections will elaborate on the major findings related to income and its use.

The income varied greatly among graduates depending on their trade, skills, location, multiple skills, and individual characteristics as well as on their previous work experience. Although the EF has fixed a threshold to define gainful employment – a monthly income of at least NPR 4’600 – this threshold does not explain how different income levels are perceived. Whether an income is regarded to be sufficient depends on the personal situation, personal aspirations, location and prices, family income needs, past income, and availability of jobs in the local area.

Even though there is a huge diversity of how income is used based on personal priorities, necessities and future aspirations it is possible to trace out main foci of income distribution, which are visualized in the following figure (cf. Fig. 11).

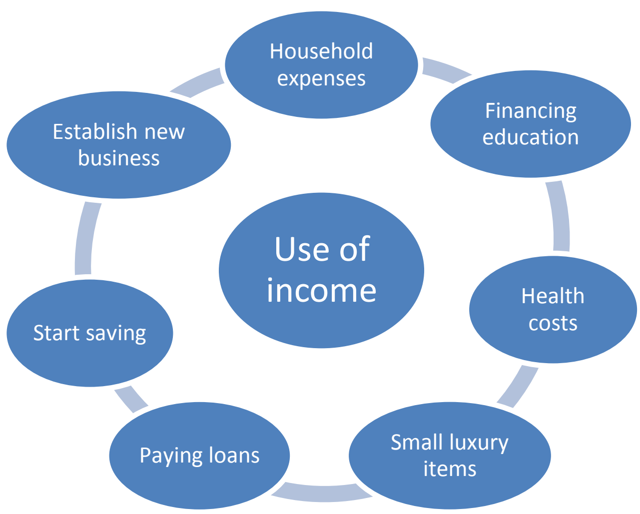


Fig. 11: Use of income by the interviewees

The common use of income covers household expenses such as the purchasing of food and other daily consumables. The majority of the interviewed beneficiaries use their income to fully or partially support their families in financing household expenses. In their opinion, sustaining and earning the livelihood of their family has become easier. Some graduates place great importance on using their income to invest in better education of their children by shifting them from community schools (free of charge) to private schools (paid), which are considered to deliver education of higher quality.

Beneficiaries also have started visiting nearby health facilities and hospitals, including private hospitals with more expensive but quick and immediate treatments. The increase in income helped them to achieve greater freedom of choice.

"I have spent my money on my daughter's marriage recently. I also spent money on buying seeds, paying school fees, rent, and on food etc."
(IDI with MEJC beneficiary, female, Kaski)

"I buy things like clothes. I also spend money on my children and household expenses."
(IDI with PtP beneficiary, DAG female, Kanchanpur)

"I am saving money in a bank. I want to upgrade my business by taking more training. I also want to take a fashion-designing course for a year. I think it will be of help and will help more for my business."
(IDI with MEJC beneficiary, female, Terhathum)

Some beneficiaries save a part of their income. Savings are mostly utilized to pay off loans, and to invest in expanding or setting up a new business. A group of respondents, especially those engaged in entrepreneurship, utilize or save their income for (future) reinvestments in their businesses in order to enhance their competitiveness. In some cases, they have also utilized the income to finance additional skills training for them and their family members. For some large earners, there is a tendency to invest in land, building construction, and property.

An increased income also leads to a shift in the distribution of power to make decisions within families: encouragingly, female beneficiaries reported an increased autonomy in making decisions on how to use their income.

In summary, an increased income results in a more purchase-oriented behaviour. Larger investments are made in children's education and health care. Graduates on the one hand start to save their money and on the other hand are prone to make larger investments and to take greater risks concerning investments.

3.2.3. Coverage and Outreach to Ultra-Poor and Disadvantaged Groups

One of the crucial features of the EF program has been its commitment to target and reach the most disadvantaged and ultra-poor. One of the key impact study questions therefore was: do we reach the ultra-poor through the PtP component? T&Es and EF staff engaged in monitoring processes stated that compared to the time before the introduction of the PtP component, the current EF program has managed to cover poor households and to reach individuals with a higher need of support in training and income generation. This improvement in coverage was largely related to the adjustment of target group categories, focusing distinctly on the very poor and people with special needs (cf. Fig. 2), and the related adjustment of incentive payments to T&Es. Encouraged by the provision of incentives, T&Es made various efforts to cover individuals form disadvantaged groups. However, our analysis shows that supply and demand side barriers hamper the coverage and reaching out to the ultra-poor and most disadvantaged.

Supply Side Barriers

While the incentive payments have motivated T&Es to find ways to cover trainees from the EF's priority categories, the result-based payment system prevented them from taking too high risks. Internal screening criteria for the enrolment of trainees set by T&Es in addition to the broader criteria set by the EF often discourage T&Es to sign up participants from disadvantaged groups. People within these categories are not perceived to be trustworthy and reliable – characteristics required by the T&Es. Furthermore, T&Es mentioned that because there exists a variety of programs and services (e.g. skills training programs, job opportunity programs) that target disadvantaged communities such as Dalits, they tend to drop out of the trainings, which leads to a financial loss. The question remains whether these drop outs are actually related to these "many opportunities" in the market provided for disadvantaged groups as mentioned in one interview or whether demand side barriers elaborated on in the following section play a more significant role.

> *"There are incentives in taking trainees from disadvantaged groups. However, we do not give it high priority. There is risk in taking Dalits in the training as they have many opportunities in the market; they can leave the training anytime."*
>
> (IDI with T&E, Terhathum)

Demand Side Barriers

While some members of disadvantaged groups can benefit and select from various services (such as the EF) as mentioned in the previous section, others cannot access them because they face several demand side barriers, such as their financial dependency on an every-day income to meet their and their family's basic needs. Especially ultra-poor youth are confronted with demand side barriers that are beyond the capacity and resources of T&Es to balance out through supply side support. As T&Es take the decision on whom to provide with training, applicants have higher chances to be enrolled if they possess specific characteristics and are not subject to such demand side barriers. This section compiles a set of characteristics that lead to higher or lower chances of getting covered by the EF program (cf. Fig. 12).

Covered	Less likely covered
• Below 25 years • Without dependents • With mobility chances • Some other regular income that keeps households going • Have some links to track the beneficiary	• Above 25-40 • With dependents • Need to earn regularly to feed family members • With special needs • Do not have any links to track the beneficiary

Fig. 12: Characteristics of beneficiaries determining a successful application at the EF

Individuals above 25 years of age with the need to make a living every day to feed their family dependents have a limited possibility to take training, especially because the resulting opportunity costs cannot be compensated for. Even though facilities (such as lodging and day care centres for children) arranged by T&Es are encouraging, they are not adequate to cover the needs and overcome the barriers of a wide range of disadvantaged youth. The T&Es' support should therefore be customized to the individual households.

Textbox 6: Case Study –The importance of family and employer's support

Family support along with the understanding of employers is crucial to make the participation and completion of training possible

In Kanchanpur, a male beneficiary managed to complete training on furniture making with the support from his wife. He recently had returned from India, where he had worked as wage laborer in construction. He opted for the training due to the support and assurance from his wife. However, he had to ensure that his family, his two children and his wife, at least have some basic income for survival during the training-period. That's why he continued working as a wage laborer in construction. He used to get up early in the morning and ride around 20km to the training centre by bicycle. He would reach his regular workplace by mid-day. His wife would bring him food to the construction site to enable him to work for full hours to earn a daily wage. His contractor was often unhappy about him arriving late to work because of the training in the morning. However, with some patience and support, he managed to complete the training and is now a well-settled carpenter technician and an entrepreneur.

3.2.4. Impact on Women and Other Disadvantaged Groups

Women, people with special needs and disadvantaged groups including Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesi and Muslims fall under the core target groups of the EF. The program not only planned to serve those groups directly by imparting skills to generate income it also ensured a higher level of other impacts on those groups.

Impact on Women

What worked well for them?

The skills training has led to multiple positive changes in the lives of female beneficiaries.

> *"Before taking the training, I used to think about how I could live my life, since my husband was also not with me. I wanted to earn more, so I could provide my son with a good education. I want to buy land for my parents. Now, I can educate my son."*
>
> (IDI with PtP beneficiary, female, Parsa)
>
> *"In the past, I didn't earn anything. Now, I can also contribute to household expenses. It has been good for me."*
>
> (IDI with PtP beneficiary, DAG female, Kanchanpur)

On top of all, the skill training is considered to have increased the self-confidence among female beneficiaries. They regard themselves to have become self-dependent. Through their increased income they have earned the respect of their families, especially their in-laws, and their communities. Some beneficiaries stated that they are now consulted when family decisions are taken. In some cases, women have become the principal income earners and their family members depend on their income. Therefore, women make decisions about the use of their income on their own. This led to a changed perception within families and communities of the role of women as income earners and contributed to enhancing their self-esteem and self-confidence. Due to their skills, female beneficiaries now feel comparatively assured about securing the future of their dependents. Moreover, some married women have gained more freedom of mobility since taking the training. Because of the training, they received the opportunity to go outside the sphere of their homes.

In general, women are considered dependable, trustworthy and honest which increases their chances to find employment after taking training.

On the whole, these changes have contributed to building self-esteem among female beneficiaries, especially among single women and women in complicated marital relations.

Textbox 7: Case Study – Mushroom farming is creating new life opportunities (Female, Age: 26)

I come from a poor agriculture labor family. My childhood was hard. I had many siblings. I was married at a young age. We were not highly educated. My brothers studied till grade 8, but we daughters didn't get any opportunity to study. The family into which I married was also poor. We only had little land, and the yield from the land was small. My husband and I both had to work as labor. It was very hard for me as only my earning was used for the household expenses and I had to look after my small son. My husband drinks alcohol and his earning was just spent on alcohol. I had to face domestic violence if I didn't give him money. I was having a hard time and I just wished that I could get some training so that I can at least provide my son a happy life.

In 2014, Dhan Bahadur sir of RDC training centre helped me to take the training. He helped me with the application process. I wanted to get this training because I thought that I am capable to do farming since I had worked in the field since my childhood. Dhan Bahadur sir encouraged me and I was determined to take the training. Initially in my training days, it was difficult for me to understand as mushroom farming was a completely new thing to me. I didn't even know how mushrooms looked like.

But after the training I understood the benefits of mushrooms, how we can distinguish between poisonous and non-poisonous mushrooms etc. I also understood about what kind of land is required, what should be the measurement. After the completion of training, we got money as well as mushrooms from the training centre. I bought a cooker and other required utensils, plastic etc. I started the first lot of my mushroom farming in a small land that my family owned. I earned around Rs. 25'000-30'000 in my first lot. It gave me confidence to move ahead and now I earn about 60'000- 70'000. I have been able to fulfill my son's wants and I can also buy what I desire. I am satisfied with my life. Observing my progress in this farming, my husband now also helps me.

When I initially took the training, the people of my village would say negative things about me. Now seeing my progress in life, they also want to take the training and come and ask me. I also share with them the things that I learned. I am planning to take a bigger land. I also aspire to go to a foreign country or at least to Kathmandu for 2-3 months. I want to see the world outside Jumla. I want to fly in the airplane. I guess mushroom farming skill gave me a dream to fly and I am enjoying the flight.

What were the barriers?

Barriers affecting women became apparent when they initially considered applying for training. Some potential female participants were discouraged to take training because it required them to travel far from their home. It was particularly difficult for married women to attend training if the training centres were not close to their home because they depend on having enough time to complete their household and family duties. In some cases, day care facilities were made available to female participants and enabled them to receive training. However, in most cases, having small children was considered as a barrier preventing women from taking training that required regular attendance of more than six hours per day.

> *"It's a bit difficult for females to get employment because they need to finish their household work to reach to work. Even if they go to work, their husbands become very possessive."*
> (IDI with T&E, Kanchanpur)

Although training centres provide childcare facilities, such facilities are hardly available at workplaces making it difficult for women to take on an employment. As a result, there is a higher chance for women to work before they get married and have children. Afterwards they often have to quit their job. After marriage, it becomes difficult for women to manage their time between home-related responsibilities and paid employment.

As mentioned earlier, women had higher chances to become employed after graduating from the training particularly because they are considered to be dependable, trustworthy and honest. However, after receiving training, the employed women earn less than males, even within the same trade. One reason for the income discrepancies between female and male graduates was that women often selected female-based trades, which are paid lower. The EF attempted to act against gender stereotypes by promoting skills training for women in non-traditional, male-dominant trades such as electrician, mobile repairer, motorcycle technician, furniture maker, construction labourer etc. Nevertheless, due to the low demand among women for these trades and since training hours often did not match with the preferences of women, their participation level was low.

> *"My community is conservative. I had to work outside and late. So they didn't behave good towards me. I left the job. The skills training I took was on a male-based trade. It is very hard for a female to do that job."*
> (IDI with unemployed PtP beneficiary, female, Parsa)
>
> *"I want to set up a [tailoring] shop. But I can't pay the rent. For now, I only work a little at my home. For the future, I am planning to open a shop in partnership with a woman from the village. If she helps and supports me to open the shop, then we can work together. I don't have any will and courage to open a shop on my own.*
> (IDI with unemployed PtP beneficiary, female, Kanchanpur)

It is worth noting that most of the female beneficiaries reported to have had no direct cash income before taking the training. From the perspective of employers, the following reasons were mentioned for paying females less than males: (a) women need flexibility in terms of working hours (they come late and leave early due to family responsibilities), (b) women have limited multiple skills such as the ability to ride motorbikes and they cannot travel to sites far from their workplace, (c) most of them cannot perform difficult physical activities such as climbing and carrying heavy load.

Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that women often have lower aspirations to reach a certain income level than men. In most of the cases, female graduates were found to be satisfied with a low level of income. Women expressed happiness with being able to contribute to their family income. Low aspirations might apply especially to those female graduates whose low levels of decision-making power within their families remain and who generally lack access to property and family wealth. In contrast, especially single women had aspirations to earn more to contribute to their family income and to the education of their children.

Another aspect where women often showed fewer aspirations than their male counterparts is the willingness to take the risks that are involved in becoming an entrepreneur. In absence of adequate support of their families, female beneficiaries lack courage and motivation to become self-employed. In many cases, female beneficiaries went into partnership with other female graduates or women of their community to set up an enterprise.

In summary, these barriers may limit the opportunities and options for women to benefit from the skills training in the best possible way. They have to take training and find employment that is compatible with their family responsibilities and restrictions. On the one hand, this reduces their chances to be paid as much by their employers as men. On the other hand, it tends to make women have lower income aspirations than men.

Impact on Disadvantaged Groups

Caste-based discrimination, which is anchored in most segments of the Nepali society, affects marginalized groups such as Dalits in many ways. Although there are special incentives for enrolling Dalits into EF trainings, they mostly sign up for trainings in trades that fit the social norms. It is easier for a Dalit woman to receive training and to get employment on, for example, stitching while it would be very difficult for her to work as a cook in a restaurant. The EF has shown some tendency to enrol trainees in caste-based trades, for example by training 'Pariyar or Damai'[15] in tailoring.

> *"Dalits face a challenge in going to work for others. People first take their own people in their business. There is a challenge for them to work as cook as people don't eat food prepared by Dalits."*
> (IDI with T&E, Jumla)
>
> *"This trade was our culture by birth so I took this training. I took this training because I thought this can change my life."*
> (IDI with PtP beneficiary, DAG Female, Terhathum)

In general, beneficiaries from DAGs reported that their social status has improved compared to the past. They are now perceived to be more dependable. Overall impacts such as increased social confidence, enhanced self-esteem and independence are clearly applicable to beneficiaries from disadvantaged groups.

Impact on Muslim Women

In Parsa and eastern Terai districts, Muslim women benefited from the EF program. Muslim women are mostly engaged in home-based trades (such as garment stitching) which

[15] Dalit castes, traditionally engaged in tailoring.

do not require leaving their home. Their participation in trainings was possible because training centres were located near to their community and hence did not require long distance travel or staying away from their families over a longer period of time (days, weeks). Muslim women respondents underlined that it was possible for them to take part in the training because it was organized during daytime and because other female members of their community also attended the courses. On the whole, the women have managed to gain some income, which has enhanced their self-confidence and self-esteem along with an increase in their decision-making power within their families and about the use of their income. However, changes mainly were obtained within their families and on household level. The mere participation in the training and employment does not seem to have contributed to broader changes in the society and concerning the gender roles of Muslim women. Their training in mostly home-based trades might have limited the impact on a broader scale.

Impact on People with Special Needs

The EF has covered few people with special needs. The effect of the program varied depending on the type of special needs (i.e. single women, people with disabilities), the type and severity of the people's disabilities, and on the availability of a supportive environment especially within families, training centres, and workplaces.

The incentive-based payment mechanism could not capture the complexity of attracting and including people with special needs. In the opinion of T&Es, the incentives provided to enrol individuals with severe disabilities are very low compared to the resources they need to invest to retain them. Moreover, be it through self-employment or paid employment, the income levels for people with disabilities tend to remain low. By setting lower thresholds defining gainful employment for youth with special needs, more T&Es might be encouraged to enrol them. Moreover, trades should be identified and focused on that are especially suited to be practiced and utilized by youth with special needs, depending on their impairment.

Textbox 8: Case Study – A trainee with a disability and higher hopes

A person with a severe disability (missing one leg) was spotted weaving a nylon net to collect fodder under the shed in Krishnapur on the side of East-West Highway in Kanchanpur district. His primary job is to repair electronic motors. During free time, he weaves nylon nets, which yields a profit of around NPR 150 per net; he can complete 2-3 nets per day. He makes an income of around NPR 4’000 per month, supports his family in educating his children and meeting daily requirements, and makes regular savings in the local cooperatives where he has already deposited around NPR 8’000. His life has completely changed from what he was like and how he used to live two years back. Despite being the father of five children and the husband of a wife who only works partially in the field around his house, he used to stay idle without doing any work due to his disability. His family was helped by his parents and neighbors to feed the family. He used to listen to all the problems of his family, face the humiliation, and was very much dissatisfied with his life for not being able to do anything.

Then, someone working for a T&E visited him and asked him about his willingness to join the training. As he needed someone to assist him on a regular basis, he was not sure whether he could receive the training. The T&E made the commitment that they will finance him as well as his caretaker (his wife) to live near the training venue for the period of training. He was provided with accommodation and was also encouraged to perform well during the training. Because of the nature of his disability, he had to select motor-repairing training so that he could work in a wheelchair. After completing the training, the T&E helped him to be placed in a work very near his home where he used to earn around NPR 3’500 per month. Then, the community leaders asked him to also guard the public toilet (for extra payment) while doing his work, and he shifted to the shade under the tree near the public toilet and opened his own motor repairing station. With skills shared by his friend, he also started to weave nylon nets during his free time. He is happy with his present situation compared to earlier but has lots of hope for the future. According to the T&E, their additional investment for the person was in vain as it meant a loss for them in monetary terms since he earned below the income threshold of gainful employment (NPR 4’600).

Success – Indicator for Change

The qualitative interviews repetitively show that success is the dominant indicator for change and impact. The following table itemises success in order to show drivers, barriers and visions helping to strengthen future program planning taking shortcomings but also visions of participants into account.

Tab. 6: Itemisation of success

Definition of success	• Be independent, earn money and support one’s family and uplift one’s economic situation • Possess skills and be able to utilize (capitalize) them • For women success is to work equally and hand-in-hand with men • Live an exemplary life and create change within society (especially for women that was an important part of success)
Drivers for success	• Will to overcome poverty and related issues such as lack of decent housing, decent work and household income • Self-realisation and becoming recognized within society (mainly early married women) • Motivation to work hard, ambition, determination, confidence about the quality of obtained skills • Access to free training even without educational degree in hand
Barriers against success	• Family matters (marriage, instable family income, tensions between family members, husband working abroad, child care)

	• Patriarchal society • No access to official money lending and banking systems • Unmotivated and low quality work • Training inadequate to meet local market demands (saturation of market)
Visions to achieve success	• Become an entrepreneur, work independently and under own guidance • Become a skills trainer in a T&E or within own enterprise • Make a difference in society and show that skills help to make a difference in personal life • Break down old patriarchal perceptions on gender by being a model of change

3.2.5. Impact on T&Es

One of the key impacts of the EF program has been the overall development of T&Es. The EF has indirectly contributed to the promotion and strengthening of the private sector in delivering high-quality skills training. In the opinion of several of the consulted stakeholders, the program has clearly demonstrated that the private sector can be a useful and reliable partner in delivering the desired outcomes if the partnership is managed properly with suitable terms and conditions. The availability of decentralized, capable and resourceful T&Es throughout the country has had twofold advantages: (i) it has provided nationwide access for the people in need to skills trainings (however noting that some districts are still not covered by the T&Es and that the very remote districts are only covered through mobile trainings[16]), and (ii) it has created the availability of skills training resources at the local level to be utilized by various agencies, projects, and initiatives (for example: the EVENT project funded by the World Bank and managed by the MOE is already utilizing available local training centres).

The partnership with the EF on the basis of the result-based payment system has been challenging as well as fruitful for the T&Es. In the opinion of the consulted T&Es, the following have been the key impacts on them.

Establishment and Institutionalization

The EF has created an environment for the T&Es to establish themselves and institutionalize their operation. The T&Es have identified their area of specialization and have created their own corporate identity. Most of them are

"We have been working with the Employment Fund since 2008-2009. Now, this organization is working with 32 full time workers and 82 part time workers in 10 districts including Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur."

(IDI with T&E, Parsa)

"My (social) prestige has also improved after starting the training centre to provide skill trainings."

(IDI with T&E, Kanchanpur)

[16] Mobile trainings are conducted in remote areas at locations away from the T&Es' central or branch offices. All the mobile training facilities are temporarily provided and managed by the T&Es.

concentrating their efforts and resources on the development of specific trades that they can specialize in. The operators of the T&Es also perceive an improvement in their social status and prestige especially because many families thank them for providing them with life-changing training opportunities.

Culture of Competition, Learning and Improvement

> *"EF has provided us with training related to report writing, proposal writing, office management, data management and monitoring. "*
>
> (IDI with T&E, Kanchanpur)
>
> *"When we started working with the EF, we got the opportunity to learn more. This kind of program is effective."*
>
> (IDI with T&E, Terhathum)
>
> *"Training of Trainer is given for 7 days by SSR [a training provider]; it has helped us in building capacity."*
>
> (IDI with T&E, Jumla)

Through the provision of payments based on performance and the annual invitation to bid for the contract to conduct training, the EF has created a culture of competition, learning and improvement. The T&Es repeatedly have to demonstrate their capacity and growth to be able to continue their partnership with the EF. This has developed a healthy competition between the T&Es whereby they try to introduce innovations and to set high standards for their performance.

Capacity Building and Human Resource Development

The EF has contributed to the capacity building of T&Es in a number of areas including preparing proposals, calculating costs, attaining basic research skills, conducting rapid market appraisals (RMAs) etc. The T&Es have also received the capacity to identify suitable trades, to shape curriculums, and to forward them to the CTEVT for approval. Over the years, a number of trainers and co-trainers were identified and trained at the T&E level and are now organizing trainings at the local level. T&Es have been remarkably successful in producing trainers, mostly from among former trainees. Most of the T&Es have a sufficient number of local trainers.

Good Return and Expansion (Leading to Infrastructure Development)

The T&Es have expanded the volume of their businesses and their coverage over the years. The expansion is clearly directed towards larger returns and the demand for further investment especially in better infrastructure for the training programs. In the opinion of T&E officials, the agencies have seen massive improvement in terms of the availability of physical facilities, equipment and other facilities including vehicles. Moreover, the training centres have created jobs for many people. A training centre in Kaski reported that there are currently 250 people employed in the training centre.

"With EF support, we have been able to create opportunities for employment, develop infrastructure, human resource, and generate assets."

(IDI with T&E, Parsa)

"At present, we are providing training in 16 districts and have 31 different types of trades for which we provide skills training."

(IDI with T&E, Kaski)

"Due to free training, people who used to take paid training have also decreased."

(IDI with T&E, Kanchanpur)

"Our future plan is to organize paying courses."

(IDI with T&E, Parsa)

T&E's Struggles

There were some concerns of T&Es regarding the partnership with the EF particularly related to its modality and the sustainability of its approach. While the partners appreciated the standard norms and strict adherence to these norms, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that the definition of 'gainful employment' was the same across all the districts and for all categories of beneficiaries. A solution may be to define different income thresholds that are connected to different incentives, so that all levels of employment are recognized and regional differences are accounted for.[17]

Moreover, the T&Es regard the income verification to be done very early (within six months after training) while some beneficiaries manage to get gainful employment only after six to eight months. They also consider the income verification to have been exclusively led and conducted by the EF, while in theory, it should have been conducted jointly.

T&Es expressed their dissatisfaction with the requirement to submit a proposal every year. In their opinion, the modality puts them into additional risks given that they have to take loans to arrange the required infrastructure and facilities for the trainings. Many T&Es suggested extending the contract duration to at least two years. Another option would be to simplify the criteria for the submission of proposals during the application process.

T&Es had mixed opinions about the effect of free training on the sustainability of their business. Some T&Es were of the opinion that due to the availability of free training, the demand for paid training will decrease, and thus will have a negative effect on the sustainability of offering paid trainings. However, some T&Es were positive about carrying out paid trainings in the future utilizing their experience, local human resources and infrastructure arranged for the EF funded training.

[17] This was suggested by the EFS' Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, Interview: 24.02.15, Kathmandu.

4. Lessons Learnt

The efforts and innovations initiated by the EF to tackle the challenges surrounding the skills and employment sector in Nepal make it possible to draw various lessons learnt within the scope of this qualitative impact study.

Tab. 7: Summarization of what has worked and fields of improvement

What has worked	How
Setting new standards in the TEVT sector	In close cooperation with the MOE the EF has further developed curricula and training programs that are linked and certified through government official tests. EF trainees get access to the official education, training and skills sector (for disadvantaged groups and women this often is the first access to education).
Scaling up the participation of DAGs and women and improving their self-esteem and societal recognition	Approaching DAGs and women directly by including their families and providing face-to-face information about the EF program would help to scale up their participation. T&Es receive incentive payments for enrolling DAGs in training. Opening up trainings in non-traditional trades to women and the sensitization of communities have increased the occupational opportunities as well as the self-esteem and social recognition of women.
T&Es as solid and efficient partners for occupational and business education and job placements. T&Es as facilitators for socio-political sensitization	T&Es have professionalized their businesses and enlarged their portfolio of training curricula and their networks to the employment market. Engagement of female trainers has increased the participation of female and DAG beneficiaries. Strategies for the sensitization of employers, the labour market and society have been developed: • Counselling and exposure visits to trainees and their living environment (family, society) • Delivering life skills before occupational skills training to strengthen the trainees' personality and self-esteem • Engage future employers in skills training to familiarize both parties on a neutral ground (pre-selection strategy) • Diversification of training courses leaving space for women to become acquainted with other employment options
Close governance and intensive M&E secure success	The EF's strict and strong governance secures the effective and correct implementation of the program. The result-based payment system secures the participation of the T&Es in M&E and minimizes/reduces discrepancies and misunderstandings between the EF's objectives and the T&Es' responsibilities.
Private sector can learn, profit, invest, innovate, and perform effectively	The EF depends on the private sector to deliver results. Clear terms and conditions for payment with several provisions to contribute to the T&Es' capacity building encouraged their participation in the program. To compete and maximize the returns, the private sector has made investments, initiated innovations and developed strategies to profit from incentive payments from the EF (integration of DAGs and women). The EF's approach has ultimately contributed to meeting key performance targets and to building trust in the private sector to engage and partner with the non-profit development sector.
Participants rate skills and certifications to be of higher value than mere income	In addition to employment and income, graduates highly appreciate the chance to certify their skills. The certification of their skills enhances their recognition and approval as skilled workers in the labour market. Trainees that received certification by the NSTB consider it to be essential for their recognition, self-esteem and confidence. Furthermore, government certification allows graduates to enter state education, higher-level training and further education.

Fields of improvement	
Mitigating societal biases to generate equal employment opportunities for DAGs and women	Social change needs time and facilitation to dismantle complex traditional settings. T&E support and the training period are not sufficient to overcome personal, family or societal perceptions (e.g. discomfort of women to work among males). DAGs face limited access to official financial loan systems (banks, small micro-credit institutions, etc.), which hinders the development of self-employment strategies.
Outreach to the ul-tra-poor and highly disadvantaged	T&Es do not have the personal and financial resources to offer extra coaching and training for trainees with limited education qualifications. Training modules are limited in time, rich on information and have clear learning targets leaving no space to address special educational needs (illiteracy, mathematic weakness, etc.). This limits employ-ment options for a significant number of trainees. T&Es lack didactics and pedagogical methods to creatively include additional educational qualifications in existing curricula.
Offering multi-skilling modules (which would increase all year round employa-bility)	Vocational skills directed to seasonal employment (e.g. brick making) are not sufficient for year around employment, and additional skills are required for off-season periods.
Threshold defining 'gainful employment' does not reflect the quality of employ-ment and income.	The threshold defining 'gainful employment' does neither give a real picture of the quality of an employment nor of the graduates' satisfaction with their employment. The verification period of 'gainful employment' is very short (6-months post training) and does not verify the long-term success of the EF program.
Uniform approaches do not fit to all socio-economic and politi-cal contexts	The EF has had two key uniform provisions: (i) the fixed monthly income threshold defining gainful employment across the whole country and for all types of beneficiar-ies, and (ii) the same incentive payments for different training trades. Both of these provisions have affected the program results. The fixed gainful income threshold dis-couraged T&Es to enrol DAGs in training programs. Similarly, the same incentives for all trainings encouraged T&Es to select trades with low unit costs or trades that re-quired limited capital investment.
Training enrolment requires individual support mechanisms	T&Es (based on the EF guidelines) provide various types of support to trainees with special needs such as lodging and food, day care facilities for women with children during training hours etc. However, the available support mechanisms are inadequate and do not meet the diverse and complex needs of ultra-poor households, disadvan-taged groups and women. Women often face barriers related to family and gender roles while DAGs face community and society linked barriers. Therefore, educational advertising within the society and family is vital to secure sustainable success in train-ing and employment.

5. Recommendations

Even though the EF is coming to its final stage of implementation, the authors of this re-port hope that the subsequent recommendations will support further planning strategies and will contribute to the strengthening and expansion of well-established program mecha-nisms and modalities. In the following, the recommendations are consolidated under four core headings that reflect the findings and insight that were gained through this impact study.

To the Employment Fund

- The indicator of **gainful employment** is not regionally contextualized and only grasps monetary aspects.
    - Develop an indicator capturing the satisfaction of trainees with their income and employment status and consider adapting the threshold of gainful employment to the regional level of wages.
    - Lower the income range of gainful employment for women and disadvantaged groups.
- Develop mechanisms to provide further support to EF graduates *after* the 6-months verification period in order **to increase** their **long-term employability** (also self-employment). Some possible areas of support would be:
    - Upgrade skills through the provision of high level skills training (level 2 and higher) (partially funded or non-funded).
    - Provide support in identifying and imparting multiple skills.
    - Address income management in order to gain optimum benefits, for example by explaining investment possibilities and raising awareness of long-term income planning and saving strategies.
- Use the **role of T&Es** to support societal changes.
  Consider developing an awareness program for T&Es on their role as social change makers. Increase their potential to influence and facilitate changes concerning societal perceptions, biases and behaviours towards DAGs, women and other groups with special needs.
- Balance the program focus by **expanding the cooperation with demand side actors** (i.e. employment providers) in order to (a) create a better and professionalized work environment for skilled trainees, (b) sensitize employers for the needs of DAGs and women workers and (c) increase the productivity of the business sector using the capacity of skilled trainees and thereby increase economic returns. The EF needs to work with businesses (during but even more importantly also after the EF trainings) to secure the following aspects of a decent work environment for its graduates in the long-term:
    - Official contract with clear terms and conditions
    - Dress code and measures to ensure safety from occupational hazards
    - Gender equality

    - Standard recruitment processes that recognize certificates
    - Payment on time
    - Assurance of salary increment (after a specific period of employment)
- **Create public demand** for the training (in addition to the campaign by T&Es).
  Currently, the EF relies exclusively on the T&Es for the mapping and selection of training participants. This modality has led to the coverage of selected locations that does not develop further into other regions. The EF could organize national and regional awareness campaigns to support the advertisement strategies of the T&Es by utilizing available government networks and other existing channels. Such networks could be the ones of District Development Committees (DDC), Women Development Offices and other district level offices that are linked to livelihood promotion.
- **Explore opportunities to work with the Nepal Chamber of Commerce**
  Since one of the priorities of the EF is to link their skilled trainees to long-term employment and decent working environments, the EF can partner with the Nepal Chamber of Commerce in following activities:
    - Conducting national and district level market appraisals for key trades (depending on the district context) to be utilized by the training projects and T&Es
    - Compiling and publishing a list of available jobs at the district level on a weekly or monthly basis
    - Encouraging businesses to professionalize their work especially by setting up a suitable work environment for their employees (with focus on DAGs and women)
- Expand **multiple skills and soft skills trainings**
  The long-term value of such skills for trainees is rated very high as it enhances their self-esteem and consequently their employability. Some possible options could be:
    - Map the need of life skills-support at the personal level (during a training period).
    - Discuss with trainees about the skills they already have and map additional multi-skills that could be essential for a sustainable employability.

For Targeting DAGs

- Possibly due to the political correctness upheld within program communication and documentation (by the EFS and donors), still persisting and deeply rooted preconceptions about DAGs, but also problems within DAG communities are not adequately addressed and discussed. For that purpose, deepen the understanding of regional and societal contexts of DAGs and women and of how and by whom discrimination is produced and re-produced. Complex social and intra-caste relations have to be considered and be clearly mentioned and discussed on a general program level as well as on a T&E level within the different districts.

- Moreover, the individual family and community relations of DAG participants have to be studied and taken into account as well. For that purpose, expand individual coaching of beneficiaries from DAGs. Face to face contact by EF staff with DAG participants and their environment has to begin with the recruitment process. Barriers to join the training have to be identified on an individual level and specific support has to be provided to remove them.
- Sensitization or awareness raising programs could be organized in the communities of potential DAG participants. Special funds could be earmarked for such purposes.
- Expand the cooperation with Dalit, Janajati and women organisations (exceeding the already existing collaboration in the recruitment process).

For the M&E System

- Monitoring as the basis for decision making and payment
    - **Differentiate the current monitoring approach** (incl. staff): one entity should be responsible for the process, another for the results monitoring. This avoids confusion and might build up trust on the side of the T&Es. In addition, it prevents Monitoring Officers from being biased or put under pressure because the ones in close contact with T&Es during the process monitoring are no longer the ones making the verification during results monitoring.
- **M&E as a learning tool** and not a controlling mechanism
    - T&Es need more feedback on their participation in M&E in order to learn and perceive the M&E system as a supportive tool rather than a tool to control them.
- Adaptation of the database
    - Store **qualitative data** with the help of qualitative analysis techniques (e.g. indicators, coding, transcription).
    - Disentangle the mixture of the results-based payment system and the monitoring system within the EF database.
- Integration of individual knowledge into the database

  - Much internal and expert information is left unused because database informants have to follow fixed tables and set analysis frames to store data in the EF database.
  - Provide space to enter additional information, e.g. (tacit) knowledge, recommendations, threats and opportunities that go beyond the usual information about T&Es, trainees, etc.
- **Data analysis**
  - Train EF M&E staff and database users in the variety of data collection and analysis methods (quantitative and qualitative) in order to secure the improvement of data collection, storage and analysis.
- Establish **long-term tracking** mechanisms to track randomly or purposefully selected graduates.
  - Establish a graduates-network (Alumni) for the future exchange of information and experience among graduates in order to increase the chance of tracking former EF participants.
  - Establish a long-term monitoring of a few cases of graduates to assess the gradual impact of the EF on the lives of these graduates, i.e. a parallel and continuous impact assessment that goes beyond the program lifetime.

For Impact Assessment and Reporting

- Impact assessments need to be planned over a sufficient period of **time**, i.e. at best from the start of the program (baseline study) until its end and beyond. Target a **combination of quantitative and qualitative methods** to gain sound answers.
  - Conduct quantitative studies and analyse the revealed phenomena and knowledge gaps in more depth through qualitative studies. Metaphorically speaking: the quantitative information draws the outlines, the qualitative information provides the in-depth analysis, carves out particularities and colours the picture.
- Formulate **strict conditions** for studies:
  - Use primary data stored in the EF database.
  - Contextualize interpretations and the analysis.
  - Provide comparison to control groups or before-after comparison.
  - Make changes of definitions, classifications and categories transparent.

- Studies using a mixed approach (including qualitative methods) should analyse, interpret and present these data in accordance with the standards of qualitative research.

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Annexes

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Annex 2: Inventory Table of Previous EF Reports

	Author	*Date*	*Title*	*Objective*	*Methods*	*Remarks*
Internal EF Documents						
1	EFS Helvetas Nepal	2009	Annual Report Jan-Dec 2008	Demonstrate overall EF performance and program changes, achievements and adjustments within reporting year	• Quantitative data analysis • Comparison of set quantiative targets with actually achieved targets • Review of T&E reports	• Quantifiable outcomes and outreach to demonstrate the performance of the EF
2	EFS Helvetas Nepal	2010	Annual Report 2009			
3	EFS Helvetas Nepal	2011	Annual Report 2010			
4	EFS Helvetas Nepal	2012	Annual Report 2011			
5	EFS Helvetas Nepal	2013	Annual Report 2012			
6	EFS Helvetas Nepal	2014	Half Annual Report 2014	Present and document achieved output and outcomes of EF during reporting period	Data collection: • Quantitative data collection through monitoring and evaluation unit (EF database) • 3-month post training assessment on income, gainful employment (sample 14% of total trainees) • Sample selection: stratified random sample selection Data analysis: • Comparison of set quantitative targets with actually achieved targets (EF database and internal working papers) • Review of T&E reports	• Concentration on quantifiable results to demonstrate effectiveness, efficiency, outcome and outreach of the EF program and its management • Focus on the indicator "gainful employment", but not on the impact on the trainees' wider socio-economic and cutural environment
External Documents						
7	Development Vision – Nepal (dnepal)	2010	Tracer Study of Technical Skills Development Training Programs. Graduates,	Assess the impact of technical skills development training programs on the lives of the graduates belonging to various socio-economic groups including	Sample selection: • Creation of sample universe (grouping of trades, number of employed trainees and training districts) and applying Sample Size Calculator Service that led to the sample size: 557	• Duration of study: 3 months • Quality of qualitative method application: changes and impact of

	Author	Date	Title	Objective	Methods	Remarks
			2008/2009	poor and disadvantaged groups as priority target groups	Data collection: • 40 standardized interviews with non-randomly selected employed graduates per trade (not possible within some trades due to high mobility) • Focus group discussions (open and closed questions) with family members, T&Es and employers • Standarized checklists to gain quantitative data and information • Secondary data analysis and review of project documents, EF database and occasional publications of the EF and T&Es Data analysis: Quantitative: • HELVETAS Tracer Study Tool Kit and a tailor made program developed in Access (no further details) • Analysed in absolute and/or frequency mode/s Qualitative: • Analysis in descriptive text mode	stakeholders are not sufficiently recorded and demonstrated in the report • Domination of quantitative data collection and analysis • Case studies give hints on broader socio-political and economical shortcomings and difficulties of trainees but they are neither systematically captured nor written out
8	Department for International Development (DFID)	2012	Annual Review 22.02.2010-02.02.2012	Assess output scores, relevance of program, value for money, risk and results	Sample: number of trainees in given duration (DFID funded trainees) Data collection: • Secondary data analysis • Field visits to generate first-hand data through structured interviews with EF staff and other stakeholders Data analysis: • Analysis of quantitative data from EF database (focus on DFID funded youth) • Introduction and application of a rating scale for outputs (from C to A+++) • Calculation of impact weighting and risk (not stated how and why)	• Focus is on the efficiency and implementation capacity of the EF related to DFID funding • Does not capture the whole EF outcome as DFID only is interested in the parts they funded • Applied methods and impact evaluation strategy is not specified and difficult to trace
9	Department for International Development (DFID)	2013	Annual Review 22.02.2010-15.02.2011			
10	Department for International Development (DFID)	2014	Annual Review 15.01.2010-29.01.2014			
11	Development Vision Nepal	2013	Tracer Study of Employment Fund	Examine employment retention rate of the graduates of 2011	Sample selection: random selection of 1’125 youths that participated in both trainings (occupational and business	• Dominantly quantifiable

	Author	***Date***	***Title***	***Objective***	***Methods***	***Remarks***
	(dnepal)		Supported Training Graduates of 2011	batch, while assessing changed situations in the light of contemporary labour market	skills) → randomly identified sample size: 675 Data collection: • Graduates: structured interviews (258 male and 417 female graduates) • Key informants (parents, spouses, relatives, friends and trainers), employers and EF staff members: semi-structured interviews (open and closed questions) and focus-group discussions • Secondary data analysis of prior studies, reports and EF database Data analysis Quantitative: • Applying HELVETAS Tracer Study Tool and a tailor-made program in Access (no further details) • Data entry using system for validation check (no futher details) Qualitative: • Interpretation in descriptive form • Processing of case studies	composition of data • Even qualitatively oriented questions are quantified in the end and not qualitatively used • Case studies again show quantity and numbers but do not let the recipients speak about how satisfied they are with their income, their aspired future economic status, the impact and changing effects on their lives or impact on wider socio-cultural environment • Questionnaires do not leave much space for open answers or observational remarks (quantitatively oriented questionnaire)
12	R. Johanson, A. Sharma (SDC Consultants) and Dr. Baniya (Ministry of Education)	2013	Review of Employment Fund Project	Provide evidence for the extension of Phase I and suggestions for a possible Phase II of the EF program	Data collection: • Analysis and review of secondary data (prior reports and reviews, EF database) • Review the effectiveness and efficiency of EF management and program (compare quantitative set targets with achieved reality) • Observation visits to training and employment sites (3 districts) • Interviews and focus group discussions key stakeholders (not specified): ○ contracted T&Es; T&Es being discontinued by	• Quantitative data collection and interpretation • Often not clear how percentages are generated • No integration of qualitative data analysis • Outcome and outreach is analysed • Analysis of EF Secretariat

	Author	Date	Title	Objective	Methods	Remarks
					EF as well as those which did not re-apply for the program, ○ CTEVT, NSTB & TITI, MoE, NMB Bank and other collaborating MFIs ○ donors (SDC,DFID,WB), Employment Fund Secretariat ○ trainees and graduates ○ resource organisations ○ potential employers Data analysis (not clearly speficied): • SWOT Analysis based on interview findings • Quantitative data analysis via computer based programs	and management performance • Giving extensive recommendations for improvement of EF • Quality impact: a positive change in the mindset of government towards private training providers, but no impact on government policy since EF start was noticed • No impact on government TVET but rather weakening the system by using it and not giving back (negative impact, unintended)
13	Contemporary Development Centre	2014	Documentation of Processes, Tools and Approaches Applied by the Employment Fund for Its Collaborative Interventions	Document the experience of applied processes, tools and approaches in order to identify good practices emerged in the course of implemented programs	Data collection: • Secondary data analysis of EF produced guidelines, project documents, logical framework, tracer studies, annual report • Interviews conducted through applying checklists (open and closed questions). Following groups were interviewed: ○ CTEVT, NSTB, SDP, EVENT, EIG, and EF staff (central and regional) ○ T&Es ○ 10 training graduates ○ 9 employers Data analysis (not clearly speficied): • Data triangulation to derive common observations and findings	• Effectiveness, applicability and good practices of EF tools, approaches and processes • Focus is to asses what the EF has applied and developed since project start, asking: ○ Variety of tools, approaches, etc. ○ What worked well? ○ What worked less successfully and

	Author	*Date*	*Title*	*Objective*	*Methods*	*Remarks*
						why? • Generate general good practices for Technical Education and Vocational Training sector (TEVT) (worldwide)
14	A. Ahemd, S. Chakravarty, M. Lundberg, P. Nikolov (World Bank)	2014	The Role of Training Programs for Youth Employment in Nepal: Impact Evaluation Report on the Employment Fund	Present short-term effects of skills training and employment placement services in Nepal	Data collection: • Quantitative data analysis of short-term effects on EF trainees through comparison of two groups: treatment group (selected trainees) and control group (non-selected trainees) both female (focus on 16-24 year old: AGEI) and male • Generating base line survey: field visits 2010 & 2011 and selection of interviewees on training applicant selection day, based on non-randomly (2010)/partially random (2011) process • 89% of base line group were again interviewed in 2011/2012 (longer-term impact) Data analysis: Quantitative through quasi-experimental methods: • Estimating EF training program effect via applying DID and PSM • Analysing effect of intervention on average outcomes (both groups) applying ITT • Analysing individual effect of treatement group applying ATT • All data was generated for both groups and later compared and weighted against each other → this only shows the quantitative impact of EF Qualitative: • Pre-given scoring system	• Quantitative data analysis methods • Qualitative methods are left out, even though the need is seen to incorporate impact on empowerment outcomes • Outcomes are collected via pregiven scoring systems (non-qualitative measures: data is made quantifiable) • The numbers show an impact of EF intervention but the persons, the impact defined as change of socio-economic and socio-cultural indicators are not assessed → The people behind the numbers do not speak about the quality of generated numbers
15	Human Resource Development	2014	The Study on Access to Skills Training of Women. A	• Document efforts and processes of EF to create	Sample size (no specification how sample was extracted): • 420 women graduated between 2010-2013 from 39 skills training institutes (58% were selected from total	• Quantitative analysis but not specified how the data were analysed on

	Author	***Date***	***Title***	***Objective***	***Methods***	***Remarks***
	Centre (HURDEC)		Documentation of Lessons Learned and Experiences	access for women (age 16 to 40 years) to technical skills, life skills and business skills trainigs as well as to gainful employment after training completion • Document major challenges, success factors during and after training • Document best practices adopted to encourage women to participate in different trainings	number) • Following breakdown of women related to training year: ○ 10,9% from 2010 ○ 30,3% from 2011 ○ 38,5% from 2012 ○ 20,3% from 2013 Data collection: • Review of project documents, periodic progress reports and occasional publications of the EF and T&Es • Survey questionnaires and guidelines for interviews (not specified whether open or closed) with trainees • Use of Research and Monitoring Software (REMO) to gather information (smartphone enabled software) • Interviews and conversations with EF staff (regional and central) • Visiting and conducting interviews at three resource centres involved in developing modules and trainings in life skills and business skills training Data analysis: • Collected information was transferred into central sever information analysis purpose (not clearly specified what this is)	which basis • Qualitative questiones are being asked and also included in the report with short citations • What is missing is to contextualize these qualitative statements and to relate them to the factor of impact and change and *how* the EF program was a trigger for those changes • The question is: is this due to a lack of knowledge about how to apply qualitative analysis methods and make full use of interviews? Or do the structure and the ToR not demand the application of qualitative analytical methods? • Richness of gathered information is not fully demonstrated
16	V. Karki, L. Achary, S. Mani Neupane (National Institute for Research and Training)	2014	Good Practices and Critical Factors in Monitoring and Online Database System	Provide a range of good practic-es on EFS' monitoring and online database system in course of program implementation	Data collection (mixed-method): Quantitative: • Analyse the trends of training and its beneficiaries in relation to descriptive and inferential information. • Collected from EFS documents and monitoring and online database system (EF database) Qualitative: • Assess the relevancy, effectiveness, efficiency and	• Gives a qualitative insight on various aspects of the database system (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability) by letting the respondents speak in the report

	Author	*Date*	*Title*	*Objective*	*Methods*	*Remarks*
					sustainability of EFS' monitoring and online database system field visits in two regions • In-depth interviews with EF monitoring staff (EFS regional officers, EFS database manager, EFS monitoring and evaluation coordinator) • In depth interviews with selected T&Es managers, T&E database managing staff • Interviews and conversations with beneficiaries (case studies) • Focus group disussions with EF and monitoring and evaluation staff Data analysis: Quantitative: • Application of SPSS 20 Qualitative: • Content analysis • Back track analysis performed using two case studies to investigate data flows, effectiveness and validation of data quality	• Critical reflection of the online database system • Gives recommendations on how to improve and make it more usable and effective • No recoommendation is given on how to integrate more qualitative measures to the databanse to enhance its information richness and quality
17	Mera Publications	2014	Women in Non-traditional Trades: Success factors and good practices	Analyse factors and good practices contributing to successful outcomes for women trainees and factors limiting their involvement in non- traditional trades	Sample size (no specification on selection): • 209 trainees, age range 16-25 Data collection: Quantitative: • Quantitative data review using secondary data (program documents, internal reports, progress reports) • EF database Qualitative: • Field visits in 10 districts • In-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with women trainees (drop outs and successful trainees) • Phone interviews with past trainees	• Combination of quantitative and qualitative presentation of findings • Shows impact (change on personal lives) of the trainees and empowerment of women (case studies short but provide insights) • Weakness in analytical and strategic recommendations based on given insights • Citation selection gives

	Author	Date	Title	Objective	Methods	Remarks
					• Conversations and interviews with T&Es Data analysis: • Document experiences, opinions, and suggestions of T&Es • Random selection of interviews being varified and triangulated via renewed interviews • Preparation of case studies	hints about what needs to be improved in order to be more sustainable and long-term successful with the EF program (not strategically written out) • Question: limitation of methodological ap-proaches and knowledge about how to analyse qualitative data? • Richness and possibilities of the collected data is not capitalized • No contextualisation of the data and information into the socio-cultural-, social-, political-, eco-nomical environment (richness and deepness of data 2015 and infor-mation is not written out)

Annex 3: Terms of Reference

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

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Annex 1 to contract no 430

Impact Study
Employment Fund, Nepal
Terms of Reference

Prepared by: Kai Schrader

Version 2, consolidated with contributions from Employment Fund and University of Zurich

Place and Date: Zürich, 10.12.2014

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1. Background of Employment Fund, Nepal

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) initiated the Employment Fund (EF) and started its operation in 2008. The main rationale for setting up EF was to establish a mechanism for funding short-term skills training and employment services of private sector Training and Employment Service Providers (T&Es) through a result-based system. The purpose of EF is to support the gainful employment of unemployed youths by imparting skills.

In June 2008, SDC and the Ministry of Education signed the agreement for the *Employment for Youth through Franchising* project (May 2008 – April 2011). Within the framework of this project, F-SKILL Pvt. Ltd. was contracted to train youth from economically disadvantaged and socially discriminated groups in technical skills through their franchisees, and support trained women and men to enter in gainful employment. In July 2008, UK-Aid from the Department for International Development (DFID) and Helvetas signed a Supplementary Programme Memorandum (July 2008 to December 2009) through which £3 million were allocated to EF for skills training of 12,000 young people from economically disadvantaged and socially discriminated groups. 60% of the participants were expected to be women. With the significant increase in available resources and based on the request of DFID, EFS expanded its collaboration with private sector T&Es beyond F-SKILL and initiated competitive procurement mechanisms in order to contract 17 T&Es by December 2009.

In 2008, the World Bank approached HELVETAS for the implementation of their Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative (AGEI) through EF. The World Bank and HELVETAS signed an agreement in early 2010 for the training of 4,375 young women. DFID decided in 2009 to extend its support for the EF for the period 2010 to 2013 by providing £9 million for the training and job placement of 35,000 young women and men.

In 2010, SDC commissioned two reviews of EF. Based on the findings of these reviews, the Project Document for the First Phase of EF (2011-13) was developed. At that time, the harmonisation of the donor support to EF was further strengthened as the Project Document and logical framework were developed jointly for the SDC and DFID support. In 2011, the Government of Nepal (GoN) and the Government of Switzerland signed a bilateral agreement for Phase I of the Employment Fund (2011-13). Tracer studies were conducted in 2012 and 2013; both studies showed that about >60% of the graduates continue their work in the same occupation and increased their incomes up to threefold three years after the training. In May 2013 an external review commissioned by SDC scrutinised the results, efficiency and effectiveness of EF and made for future avenues. In October 2014, the World Bank released its report on EF impact evaluation, which was carried out by the World Bank and confirmed significant positive impact of the program in the life of disadvantaged youth especially for the women. Presently the University of Sidney is collecting data for a new Impact Evaluation, and results will be available by June 2015.

In the period of 2008-13, the primary stakeholders of EF were unemployed, out of school youths from disadvantaged groups[1] aged 16 to 40 years (women) respectively 16 to 35 years (men). EF promoted private sector T&Es throughout the country to provide occupational skills training to young people from poor and discriminated groups that will lead them into gainful employment in national (and international) labour markets. EF enhanced the training and management capacity of the T&Es so that they are able to deliver quality trainings and achieve the intended outcomes.

[1]The term "disadvantaged groups" encompasses economically poor and socially discriminated women and men.

EF followed an outcome-based post-financing payment system. Since its establishment, EF has trained over 90,000[2] youth out of which above 70% were placed in gainful employment after the training.

The Employment Fund Steering Committee (EFSC), which is chaired by the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and includes representatives from GoN and the funding organizations, is the governing body of EF. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal serves as the Employment Fund Secretariat (EFS), which manages EF in accordance with the Operating Guidelines and the Yearly Plan of Operation (YPO). EFS carry out monitoring of the training and employment services; conducts labour market research; pilots innovations and provides capacity-building support to T&Es.

2. Purpose and objective of the impact study

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is committed as a learning organisation and accountable to all its partners (primary and secondary stakeholders as well as donors, members and other collaborating organisations) that its interventions worldwide contribute to its ultimate goal, the improvement of the living conditions of poor and disadvantaged women, men and communities. Quality in our work is understood as achieving the best-possible effects ("impact") with the available resources.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning from M&E are core competences that guarantee the result-orientation of our activities. For this, Helvetas employs a variety of controlling mechanisms such as regular and standardised programme and project monitoring, plus internal and external project and programme evaluations, as well as **impact studies of selected projects**. Such studies should contribute to organizational learning and accountability. The Employment Fund of Nepal (EF) has been selected for such a comprehensive study as it represents a strategically significant approach, has a sizeable outreach and has accumulated significant experience.

Apart from this overall organizational accountability motivation, EF is currently in its last year of the phase and Helvetas-Nepal will **design and propose a new intervention** in the sector that will build on the experiences and lessons learned from EF. This is expected to start in 2015. The Impact Assessment should contribute with its finding and recommendations to the elaboration of this new project document.

The questions of "Do we reach to the extreme poor and most disadvantaged?" and "What impact do we have on their lives?" are regularly discussed internally. Helvetas has therefore decided to establish a series of **evidence-based case studies** that document the impacts of our approaches and shed light on the challenges of pro-poor orientation: what has worked, how, what has not worked, and why. We want to take advantage of the opportunity of the Impact Assessment in order to find answers to these questions deepening through a qualitative research, so that eventually it contributes to institutional learning and improving practice.

3. Scope and focus of the impact study – study questions

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation seeks in-depth information about the project's broad **outreach** (how many and what type of beneficiaries reached) **and outcome** (what are the overall changes in their employment, income situation, and lives). Quantitative information should be provided in this respect; much of it could be extracted from Tracer Studies and other analysis conducted by the project (desk research / secondary data analysis).

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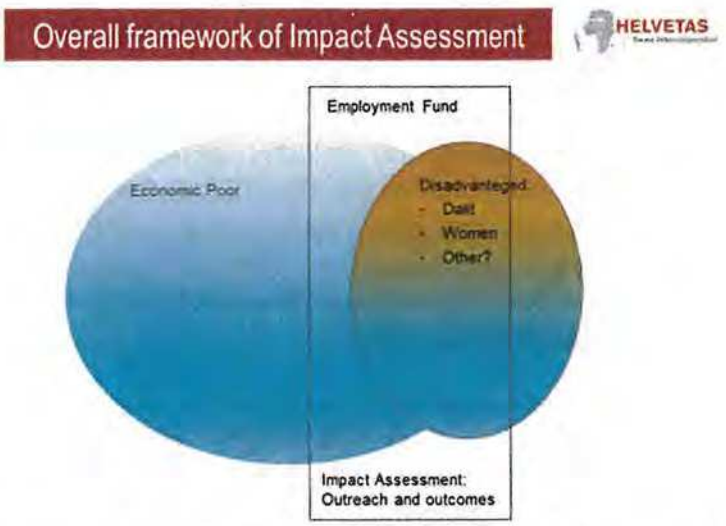
[2] Trained since 2008 until 2014 September



Moreover, the study should provide more qualitative information regarding the impact: What has changed for the skilled graduates and training and employment service providers compared to the situation before the project? The study then should deepen knowledge on the question of "Do we really reach, and have a positive impact on the lives of, the targeted disadvantage groups (the extreme poor and most disadvantaged, e. g Dalit and Janajati women, youth with special needs, i.e. widows, youth living with disabilities, violence-affected women, etc.)?" What are the changes they perceive and appreciate, and does this impact differ from the impact on other youth and training and employment (T&E) service provider groups?

	Discriminated caste & ethnicity		**Non-discriminated caste & ethnicity**	
	Men	Women	Women	Men
Non poor > 6 m food security or > 1.25 US $ income/day				
Poor < 6 m food security or < 1.25 US $ income/day		In-depth interviews (specific case study)		

The impact study should verify the **impact hypothesis** of the Employment Fund:

"Through the skills training and facilitation for employment to unemployed youth by Training and employment service provider economically and socially disadvantaged youth in Nepal are gainfully employed and have therefore improved their living conditions."

Some questions are detailed in the Annex. Additionally, the study has to contribute to clarify objective, economised, efficient and effective operation of the project and its monitoring and reporting system along with the existence and level of temporary employment contracts.

Utilization of findings:

- The study should be an opportunity for both **upward and downward accountability** through FGD and feedback/validation workshops with students and service providers
- Results should feed into a **new project/programme for SDE** in Nepal (recommendations for planning and design)

- Findings have to be **disseminated** in appropriate way (Debriefings, Mittagsclub, Pamoja) and should incentivize strategic discussions (e.g. on targeting DAGs).
- The study should contribute to strengthening **methodological design** of our Impact Studies
- The study should contribute in deepening **institutional knowledge** with lessons drawn from the project on social aspect.

4. Impact study process and methods

The detailed methodology and work plan and the concrete methods are a product of this assignment and need to be defined by the Geographical Institute of the University of Zurich (Geo UZH), the Research Input and Development Action (RIDA) and the Employment Fund (EF) in the coming weeks. It will later be attached to this Terms.

The study consists in an exhaustive desk research that will take into consideration evaluations, tracer studies, annual reports and other relevant studies and documents provided by Employment Fund. This will give way to a first assessment of the outreach and the definition of gaps for information. Together with RIDA and EF, the University of Zurich will design the field survey.

From January on, students of the Geo UZH will be in Kathmandu to detail further with EF and RIDA the research methodology and a kick-off workshop will be the starting point for the fieldwork. Tasks, responsibilities and schedules will be defined at this workshop.

The gathering of information in the field through interviews, focus group discussions, observation etc. will take place until end of February, when first impressions and findings will be shared with interested persons from Helvetas, RIDA and other institutions in order to validate the results.

RIDA and Geo UZH will analyse further their data and elaborate reports on their respective research. Deadline for the final version of the reports will be 31st of May 2015. Then, an issue sheet (4 pages-summary) of the Impact Assessment and a presentation to Helvetas staff in Switzerland (Berne or Zurich) has to be prepared.

5. Deliverables

- Detailed description of **methodology and work plan** (until 15th of January 2015)
- **Report** on the impact study (max. 60 pages; separate annexes) structured as the template annexed (until 31st of May 2015)
- Presentation of the results to the team and partners at a **validation workshop** in Kathmandu (2nd of March 2015)
- **Debriefing** with Helvetas Employment Fund Team in Nepal (in March 2015)
- **Debriefing** with Helvetas HO Zurich/Berne (IP/AS/CF/KNL) in March 2015
- **Mittagsclub** (before June 2015)
- **Issue sheet** (before June 2015)

All reports will be written in English.

6. Evaluation team and responsibilities

The overall responsibility for the study and final report on findings has the Geographical Institute of the University of Zurich. Employment Fund is responsible for the provision of data and the logistics of the study. RIDA has the responsibility for the in-depth study on the impact of the Employment Fund on most disadvantaged groups. The detailed attribution of responsibilities will be part of the methodology and work plan, later attached to this document.

The team of Geo UZH is composed by **Ulrike Müller-Böker**, Head of the Human Geography Unit of the Department of Geography, **Pia Hollenbach**, PhD Student at the Political Geography Department of University of Zurich and 1 or 2 students.

Mr. **Jeevan Lohani** is the coordinator of the RIDA team and he will assign 2-3 researchers for the study according to availabilities and needs. **Mona Sherpa**, Deputy Country Director of HELVETAS Nepal is the liaison to RIDA.

Mr **Bal Ram Paudel**, team leader of Employment Fund, is the overall responsible for logistics and data facilitation for the study, he assigned Mr. **Gopal Dangol** (IT and database officer) and Mr. **Bhanu Pandit** (M&E coordinator) for facilitation of information.

Peter Porten (Advisor in Vocational Skills Development), **Franz Gähwiler** (Programme Coordinator Himalaya) and **Kai Schrader** (Learning & Evaluation Advisor) are further resource persons at Helvetas Head Office in Switzerland involved in this study.

The entire impact assessment remains the property of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. Data and findings can be used for further scientific analysis, such as master thesis. Helvetas uphold prior right to material about its own projects. Thus any publication of the findings should only be undertaken by the contracted researchers if this is explicitly agreed with Helvetas in advance.

7. Schedule

Deadline	Products	Activities	Responsible
Preparation (15.10.-15.1. = 12 weeks)			
15.10.14 15.12.14	Approved ToRs Budget Designation of student Selection of local partner institution (RIDA) **Contract**	Bringing together all elements, partners and expectations	KAI
15.10.14 15.1.15	Compilation of relevant information Formulation of overall questions Stratification of beneficiaries **Prepare logistics** for field study	Prepare and send all relevant information	EF
15.11.14 15.1.15	Desk research Detailed Methodology Sampling Scheme (where and who)? **Detailed work plan for field work**		UZH/RIDA
Field work (15.1.-28.2. = 6 weeks)			
15.1.15	Kick-off workshop		Helvetas Nepal
	Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholder		UZH/EF

	In depth interviews with DAG and non-DAG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries		RIDA/UZH
	Focus Group Discussions		RIDA/UZH
2.3.15	**Validation workshop**		UZH
	Debriefing		Helvetas Nepal
Analysis, feedback and reporting (1.3.-31.5.15 = 12 weeks)			
	Data Analysis		UZH
31.3.15	First draft of report		
	Review		
31.5.15	**Final version of report**		
	Issue sheet		
	Mittagsclub		

8. Resources

For the study, Helvetas will pay to the Geography Department of the University of Zurich a lump sum of **26'100 CHF** that includes remuneration of the involved research team (students), flights to and from Kathmandu, and costs for accommodation, meals and other personal expenses. Material and transport costs in Nepal will be covered by the Employment Fund.

RIDA and Employment Fund will have additional budgets that will be defined in the specific ToRs.

9. Reference documents

- ProDoc with logframe
- Annual reports
- Mid-term and other evaluations
- Case studies
- Tracer Studies
- World Bank Impact Evaluation Report

10. Annex

10.1. Proposal on Methodology by the Geographical Institute University Zurich

In order to complement, to bring a richness of the data and to add value to the Impact Study conducted by the University of Sydney, which will use a quantitative approach gaining insights into the outcome of the EF in Nepal, the University of Zurich will use a qualitative data collection approach. These two data sets can later be cross evaluated in order to validate the data but also to gain a broader understanding of the Impact of the EF in Nepal.

The qualitative impact study is based on qualitative data, which is gained through interaction within the social setting of the EF. As the study will focus on two groups participating in the EF, namely

i) the training and employment service providers

ii) the training receivers/trainees with a special focus on disadvantage groups (e. g Dalit and Janajati women, youth with special needs, i.e. widows, youth living with disabilities, violence-affected women, etc.)

In order to gain the qualitative data methods and techniques such as interviews, participatory observation (primary data), and text and documentary analysis (secondary data) are used for producing empirical materials from which the data set is constructed, analysed and interpreted. The primary data will be collected via semi-structured interviews (interview guide approach, standardized open-ended interviews, informal conversational interviews). The combination of standardized (exact wording and sequence of questions is given) and more open and flexible approaches will help to guide and structure but leave enough room for spontaneous in-depth questions on upcoming interesting issues. Interviews will be conducted with individuals, key informants and groups. The overall aim is not provide qualitative data that means in-depth knowledge on the impact of the EF. Therefore the sample will be selected concerning different indicators related to trainees and service providers and one aim is to generate Life-Histories that provide detailed information on the impact of the EF and the lived reality of both investigated groups.

To analyse the data set a combination of a deductive and inductive approach will be use. As the hypothesis of the impact study is pre-given and pre-defined, the first step will use a deductive approach, collecting concrete empirical details in order to test the hypothesis. In order to react flexible to unforeseen and unexpected issues upcoming in first analysis exercised during the data collection, an inductive approach will follow to pursue more details and information on that particular new issues. Furthermore, the data will be analysed with the help of organizing it into categories on the basis of themes, concepts, or similar features. Already during data collection, conceptualization will start in order to organize and make sense of data and to react immediately to unforeseen issues (deductive and inductive approach). In a second step the data will be analysed in more detail and categories re-formulized in order to narrow down the focus of the study and to find the meaning and understanding of the data. As there is an overlap of data collection and analysis both the quality of data collection and the quality of the analysis improves the overall findings as they become more detailed, more in-depth and add a value to quantitative impact findings.

Following research questions should be addressed within the two foci groups targeting the qualitative impact study:

Service and Training Providers:

- Quantifiable Terms:
  - How many trainees were educated in your Institution?
  - How were the trainees selected and how is there socio-ethnic diversification (disadvantaged groups, gender, age etc)?
  - How many Service Institutions do you have?
  - Which trainings to you offer; how many trainees in the different trainings?
  - When did you start with offering Vocational Training and Education Courses?
- Own Perception and Rating:
  - What are differences and new innovations that the EF introduced in the Technical Education and Vocational Training Sector? Have there been significant changes within the sector over the last years?
    - If yes, please more details
  - What was the impact of the EF concerning the capacity building, growth and expansion of Training and Employment Service Providers?
    - If there was no impact, what were the reasons for that?

- How does the system of incentive distribution influence Training and Employment Providers' decisions on the trainee selection? What are the advantages/what are the disadvantages of this incentive based targeting?
- Outcome-based financing: does this system influence the selection of trainees? To the advantage/disadvantage of women/Dalit/Janajati?
- Percentage of trained women and men entering in employment?
  - Please explain the cases with failed emloyment
- How has two targeting approaches of EF, i.e. path to prosperity and working with potential entrepreneurs for job creation (MEJC), been helpful in targeting and benefitting disadvantaged group?
- Which approach will be more viable and appropriate while working with disadvantaged groups?
- Should programs such as the EF being continued in future?
  - If yes, any suggestions for improvement and adjustments
  - If not, why?

Disadvantage Groups

- What difference has EF made to beneficiaries (unemployed youth), especially to the targeted disadvantaged groups (women, Dalit, Janajati) - both in their own perception and in quantifiable terms?
  - Quantifiable Terms:
    - Who and how many individuals have been affected?
    - Are the vocational and entrepreneurship training effective in finding jobs and creating new businesses?
    - How do new generated jobs/businesses and the employment situation affect income, poverty and labour supply?
    - Does the effectiveness differ with types of trainings along with age, gender, qualification and ethnicity of the graduates?
  - Own Perception:
    - Has the project been able to address gender division of labour of women and girls as well? Moreover, has any discrimination been practiced in the project initiatives?
    - Which socio-economic impact did the EF had on the everyday life?
    - Does the post-training live affect gender and social empowerment? Do disadvantage groups perceive a more established self-esteem and different social recognition?
    - What would you do different when creating and offering Vocational Training and socio-economic empowerment programmes?
    - Do you see the participation in the EF as a long-term valuable investment for your personal life?
      - If yes, how and why?
      - If not, how and why?
    - Should programs such as the EF being continued in future?
      - If yes, any suggestions for improvement and adjustments
      - If not, why?

10.2. Table of Contents of the Report

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2. Description of the intervention
3. Objectives of the evaluation
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9 Good practices and policy recommendations

10 Annexes

Zurich, 22. December 2014

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